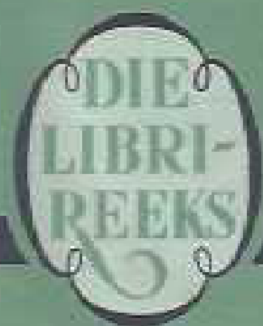


# SKATEILAND

A detailed illustration of a ship's mast and rigging, featuring a complex network of ropes and pulleys. A person is visible climbing a rope ladder. The mast has several small, round objects hanging from it. The background is a dark, stormy sea.

*Robert  
Louis  
Stevenson*



Treasure Island  
by Robert Louis  
Stevenson

## TREASURE ISLAND

To S.L.O., an American gentleman in accordance with whose classic taste the following narrative has been designed, it is now, in return for numerous delightful hours, and with the kindest wishes, dedicated by his affectionate friend, the author.

## TO THE HESITATING PURCHASER

If sailor tales to sailor tunes, Storm  
and adventure, heat and cold, If schooners, islands, and maroons, And  
buccaneers, and buried gold, And all the old romance, retold Exactly  
in the ancient way, Can please, as me they pleased of old, The wiser  
youngsters of today:

—So be it, and fall on! If not, If studious youth no longer crave, His  
ancient appetites forgot, Kingston, or Ballantyne the brave, Or Cooper  
of the wood and wave: So be it, also! And may I And all my pirates  
share the grave Where these and their creations lie!

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON  
SKATEILAND

## DIE LIBRI-REEKS

### VAN KLASSIEKE JEUGLEKTUUR

Die Libri-reeks bied aan die Afrikaanse jeug van die bekendste werke  
nit die kinder-klassieke. Dis boeke wat deur hul inhoud en styl reeds  
vir baie jare kinders oor die hele wêreld geboei het.

Robert Louis Stevenson is in 1850 in Edinburgh gebore. As jong man  
het hy in ingenieurswese belanggestel, maar het later advokaat  
geword. Hy het egter nooit gepraktiseer nie, omdat hy reeds vanaf sy  
sestiende jaar en later al sy tyd aan skryf gewy het. Hy het  
wêreldbekendheid in 1886 verwerf by die verskyning van Kidnapped  
en The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Treasure Island is in  
1882 geskrywe, nadat hy van 'n baie gelukkige reis na die Stille  
Suidsee teruggekeer het. Hier het hy ook later om gesondheidsredes  
gaan woon.

In 1894 is hy te Samoa oorlede.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON  
SKATEILAND

DERDE DRUK

J. L. VAN SCHAIK, BPK., PRETORIA  
1962

SKATEILAND het vir die eerste keer in 1925 in Afrikaans verskyn. Dit was n vertaling uit die oorspronklike deur Mev. A. E. Carinus-Holzhausen. Die huidige boek is n heeltemal hersiene en verwerkte uitgawe van hierdie eerste Afrikaanse druk.

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#### TREASURE ISLAND

# PART ONE The Old Buccaneer

## Chapter 1

### The Old Sea-dog at the Admiral Benbow

SQUIRE TRELAWNEY, Dr. Livesey, and the rest of these gentlemen having asked me to write down the whole particulars about Treasure Island, from the beginning to the end, keeping nothing back but the bearings of the island, and that only because there is still treasure not yet lifted, I take up my pen in the year of grace 17 and go back to the time when my father kept the Admiral Benbow inn and the brown old seaman with the sabre cut first took up his lodging under our roof.

I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow—a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man, his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulder of his soiled blue coat, his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails, and the sabre cut

across one cheek, a dirty, livid

white. I remember him looking round the cover and whistling to himself as he did so, and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so

often afterwards:

“Fifteen men on the dead man’s chest—

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!”

in the high, old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the capstan bars. Then he rapped on the door with a bit of stick like a handspike that he carried, and when my father appeared, called roughly for a glass of rum. This,

when it was brought to him, he drank slowly, like a connoisseur, lingering on the taste and still looking about him at the cliffs and up at our signboard.

“This is a handy cove,” says he at length; “and a pleasant sittytated grog-shop. Much company, mate?” My father told him no, very little company, the more was the pity. “Well, then,” said he, “this is the berth for me. Here you, matey,” he cried to the man who trundled the barrow; “bring up alongside and

help up my chest. I’ll stay here a bit,” he continued. “I’m a plain man; rum and bacon and eggs is what I want, and that head up there for to watch ships off. What you mought call me? You mought call me captain. Oh, I

see what you're at— there"; and he threw down three or four gold pieces on the threshold. "You can tell me when I've worked through that," says he, looking as fierce as a commander.

And indeed bad as his clothes were and coarsely as he spoke, he had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast, but seemed like a mate or skipper accustomed to be obeyed or to strike. The man who came with the barrow told us the mail had set him down the morning before at the Royal George, that he had inquired what inns there were along the coast, and hearing ours well spoken of, I suppose, and described as lonely, had chosen it from the others for his place of residence. And that was all we could learn of our guest.

He was a very silent man by custom.

All day he hung round the cove or upon the cliffs with a brass telescope; all evening he sat in a corner of the parlour next the fire and drank rum and water very strong. Mostly he would not speak when spoken to, only look up sudden and fierce and blow through his nose like a fog-horn; and we and the people who came about our house soon learned to let him be. Every day when he came back from his stroll he would ask if any seafaring men had gone by along the road. At first we thought it was the want of company of his own kind that made him ask this question, but at last we

began to see he was desirous to avoid them. When a seaman did put up at the Admiral Benbow (as now and then some did, making by the coast road for Bristol) he would look in at him through the curtained door before he entered the parlour; and he was always sure to be as silent as a mouse when any such was present. For me, at least, there was no secret about the matter, for I was, in a way, a sharer in his alarms. He had taken me aside one day and promised me a silver fourpenny on the first of every month if I would only keep my "weather-eye open for

a seafaring man with one leg" and let

him know the moment he appeared. Often enough when the first of the month came round and I applied to him for my wage, he would only blow through his nose at me and stare me down, but before the week was out he was sure to think better of it, bring me my fourpenny piece, and repeat his orders to look out for "the seafaring man with one leg." How that personage haunted my dreams, I need scarcely tell you. On stormy nights, when the wind shook the four corners of the house and the

surf roared along the cove and up the cliffs, I would see him in a thousand forms, and with a thousand diabolical expressions. Now the leg would be cut off at the knee, now

at the hip; now he was a monstrous kind of a creature who had never had but the one leg, and that in the middle of his body. To see him leap and run and pursue me over hedge and ditch was the worst of nightmares. And altogether I paid pretty dear for my monthly fourpenny piece, in the shape of these abominable fancies.

But though I was so terrified by the idea of the seafaring man with one leg, I was far less afraid of the captain himself than anybody else who knew him. There were nights

when he took a deal more rum and water than his head would carry; and then he would sometimes sit and sing his wicked, old, wild sea-songs, minding nobody; but sometimes he would call for glasses round and force all the trembling company to listen to his stories or bear a chorus to his singing. Often I have heard the house shaking with “Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum,” all the neighbours joining in for dear life, with the fear of death upon them, and each singing louder than the other to avoid

remark. For in these fits he was the most overriding companion ever known; he would slap his hand on

the table for silence all round; he would fly up in a passion of anger at a question, or sometimes because none was put, and so he judged the company was not following his

story. Nor would he allow anyone to leave the inn till he had drunk himself sleepy and reeled off to bed. His stories were what frightened people worst of all. Dreadful stories they were—about hanging, and walking the plank, and storms at sea, and the Dry Tortugas, and wild deeds and places on the Spanish Main. By his own account he must have lived his life among some of the wickedest men that God ever allowed upon the sea, and the language in which he told these stories shocked our plain country people almost as much as the crimes that he described. My father was always saying the inn would be ruined, for people would soon cease coming there to be tyrannized over and put down, and sent shivering to their beds; but I really believe his presence did us good. People were frightened at the time, but on looking back they rather liked it; it was a

fine excitement in a quiet country life, and there was even a party of the younger men who pretended to admire him, calling him a “true sea—

dog” and a “real old salt” and such like names, and saying there was the sort of man that made England terrible at sea.

In one way, indeed, he bade fair to ruin us, for he kept on staying week after week, and at last month after month, so that all the money had been long exhausted, and still my father never plucked up the heart to insist on having more. If ever he mentioned it, the captain

blew through his nose so loudly that you might say he roared, and stared my poor father out of the room. I have seen him wringing his hands after such a rebuff, and I am sure the annoyance and the terror he lived in must have greatly hastened his early and unhappy death.

All the time he lived with us the captain made no change whatever in his dress but to buy some stockings from a hawker. One of the cocks of his hat having fallen down, he let it hang from that day forth, though it was a great annoyance when it blew. I remember the appearance of his coat, which he patched himself upstairs in his room, and which, before the end, was nothing but patches. He never wrote or received a letter, and he never spoke with any but the neighbours, and with these,

for the most part, only when drunk on rum. The great sea-chest none of us had ever seen open.

He was only once crossed, and that was towards the end, when my poor father was far gone in a decline that took him off. Dr. Livesey came late one afternoon to see the patient, took a bit of dinner from my mother, and went into the parlour to smoke a

pipe until his horse should come down from the hamlet, for we had no stabling at the old Benbow. I followed him in, and I remember observing the contrast the neat,

bright doctor, with his powder as white as snow and his bright, black eyes and pleasant manners, made with the coltish country folk, and above all, with that filthy, heavy, bleared scarecrow of a pirate of ours, sitting, far gone in rum, with his arms on the table. Suddenly he — the captain, that is—began to pipe up his eternal song:

“Fifteen men on the dead man’s chest—

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!

Drink and the devil had done for the rest—

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!” At first I had supposed “the dead man’s chest” to be that identical big box of his upstairs in the front room,

and the thought had been mingled in my nightmares with that of the one-legged seafaring man. But by this time we had all long ceased to pay any particular notice to the song; it was new, that night, to nobody but Dr. Livesey, and on him I observed it did not produce an agreeable

effect, for he looked up for a moment quite angrily before he went on with his talk to old Taylor, the gardener, on a new cure for the rheumatics. In the meantime, the captain gradually brightened up at his own music, and at last flapped his hand upon the

table before him in a way we all knew to mean silence. The voices stopped at once, all but Dr. Livesey’s; he went on as before speaking

clear and kind and drawing briskly at his pipe between every word or two. The captain glared at him for a while, flapped his hand again, glared still harder, and at last broke out with a villainous, low oath, "Silence, there, between decks!"

"Were you addressing me, sir?" says the doctor; and when the ruffian had told him, with another oath, that this was so, "I have only one thing to say to you, sir," replies the doctor, "that if you keep on drinking rum, the world will soon be quit of a very dirty scoundrel!"

The old fellow's fury was awful. He sprang to his feet, drew and opened

a sailor's clasp-knife, and balancing it open on the palm of his hand, threatened to pin the doctor to the wall.

The doctor never so much as moved. He spoke to him as before, over his shoulder and in the same tone of voice, rather high, so that all the room might hear, but perfectly calm and steady: "If you do not put that knife this instant in your pocket, I promise, upon my honour, you shall hang at the next assizes."

Then followed a battle of looks

between them, but the captain soon knuckled under, put up his weapon, and resumed his seat, grumbling like a beaten dog.

"And now, sir," continued the doctor, "since I now know there's such a fellow in my district, you may count I'll have an eye upon you day and night. I'm not a doctor only; I'm a magistrate; and if I catch a breath of complaint against you, if it's only for a piece of incivility like tonight's, I'll take effectual means to have you hunted down and routed out of this. Let that suffice."

Soon after, Dr. Livesey's horse came to the door and he rode away, but the

captain held his peace that evening, and for many evenings to come.

DEEL I: DIE OU SEEROWER

# Chapter 1

## Die ou Seeman in die Admiral Benbow

Meneer Trelawney, die landheer van ons dorp, Dr. Livesey, en ander persone het my gevra om al die besonderhede omtrent Skateiland neer te skrywe, van begin tot end, ek moes niks uitlaat nie. Net een ding moes verswyg word, en dit is waar die eiland lê; want daar is nog skatte wat nie opgegrawe is nie. Daarom neem ek die pen op in die jaar 17.., en gaan terug na die tyd toe my vader nog herbergier van die Admiral Benbow was, en toe die ou seeman met die bruin gesig en n sabelhou oor die een wang, vir die eerste keer onder ons dak ingekom het.

Ek onthou hom nog asof dit gister was, soos hy daar aangestrompel gekom het na ons deur toe, met sy kis op n kruiwa agter hom aan. Hy was n lang, sterk, swaargeboude man, en bruin verbrand; sy hare het in n smerige vlegsels oor die skouers van sy vuil blou baadjie gehang; sy hande was vol snye en littekens, met swart, stukkende naels; en die sabelhou maak son vuil wit streep oor sy wang. Ek sien hom nog soos hy daar staan en rondkyk, op en af langs die strand, en al die tyd fluit hy n deuntjie, totdat hy naderhand losbars met die ou seemanslied: Vyftien man op die Dooie se kis,

Jo~ho-ho, en n bottel vol rum!

die liedjie wat hy later so dikwels gesing het in sy bewerige ou stem wat klink of dit net gewend was om aan

die spil saam te sing, as die skip se anker gelig word. Toe klop hy aan die deur met n kort stokkie wat hy dra, en wat lyk na n soort houtpen. Toe my vader die geklop beantwoord, het hy kortaf om n glas rum gevra en dit soos n fynproewer langsaam proe-proe leeg gedrink.

Dit is n mooi hoekie hierdie, sê hy eindelijk, en die herberg staan op n goeie plek. Kom hier baie besoekers, maat?

My vader antwoord: Nee, dis jammer, daar kom maar min mense.

Wel, sê hy, dan is dit net die regte tuisplek vir my. Hierso made, roep hy na die man wat die kruiwa stoot, kom hiernatoe en dra my kis in die huis in. Ek sal n rukkie hier bly, gaan hy voort. Ek is maar n eenvoudige mens, en ek sal tevrede wees met brandewyn, spek en eiers, en daardie kamer op die solder, sodat ek die skepe kan sien kom en gaan. Vra jy hoe jy my moet noem? Noem my maar kaptein. O, ek sien wat jy wil hê; dê! en hy gooi n paar muntstukke op die drumpel neer. , Jy kan maar praat so gou as dit op is, sê hy, net so stuurs soos n kommandant.

En waarlik, al was hy so swak gekleed, en al was sy taal so grof, tog



het hy nie soos n gewone matroos gelyk nie, maar baie meer soos n stuurman of n kaptein, wat gewoon is om gehoorsaam te word en dat sy bevele uitgevoer word. Die man wat die kruiwa stoot, vertel ons toe dat hy met die poskar tot by die Royal George gekom het; en dat hy daar verneem het waiter losies-huise daar langs die strand was. Waarskynlik het hy toe gehoor dat ons sn n goeie stil plek was, en besluit om hier sy intrek te neem. En dit was al wat ons omtrent ons gas kon te wete kom.

Hy was baie stil van aard. Die hele dag het hy op die strand of op die rotse met n koperverkyker in die hand

deurgebring en saans het hy alleen in die een hoek van die ontvangkamer gesit en sterk rum met water gedrink. Gewoonlik het hy geen antwoord gegee as n mens met hom praat nie; hy kyk net skielik op met son kwaai gebaar, en blaas soos n mishoring deur sy neus. Ons het ook gou geleer om hom met rus te laat. Elke dag, as hy van sy swerftog teruggekom het, vra hy of daar nie miskien n seeman verbygekom het nie? Eers het ons gedink dat hy verlang na geselskap van sy eie soort mense, maar later het ons agtergekom dat hy hulle juis wou vermy. As dit soms gebeur het dat ons besoek kry van een of ander seeman wat langs die strand op na Bristol toe reis, dan loer die ou kaptein altyd eers deur die gordyn wat voor die deur hang, voordat hy in die kamer inkom, en hy bly so stil soos n muis solank as daardie gas daar is. Die saak het vir my egter nie lank n geheim gebly nie; want ek was in sekere mate n deelgenoot in sy vrees. Hy het my eendag opsy geneem en belowe om my op die eerste van elke maand n silwer vierpenniestuk te gee as ek n oog wou oophou vir n matroos met een been, en hom dadelik daarvan kennis-gee as hy verskyn. Aan die einde van die maand egter, het hy dikwels, as ek hom om my fooi gevra het, net deur sy neus geblaas en na my gekyk, asof hy my middeldeer wou kyk. Maar voor die week om is, bedink hy hom altyd weer, en bring vir my die beloofde geldstuk, met dieselfde bevele as voorheen, omtrent die seeman met die een been.

Geen wonder dat daardie afbeenmens deur my drome beginspook het nie. As dit party nagte so stormagtig was, dat die wind die vier hoeke van die huis geskud het, en die branders teen die rotse aandreun, dan het ek hom in duisend gedaantes voor my gesien, en elke keer met n ander satansgesig op. Eers was die been by die knie af, en dan weer by die heup; dan was hy n misvormde skepsel wat nooit meer as een been gehad het nie, en dit reg in die middel van sy lyf. Om hom te sien spring en hardloop, as hy my gejaag het oor heinings en slote was seker die benoudste nagmerrie wat ek nog gehad het. Waarlik, ek het my maandelikse stukkies geld suur genoeg verdien met hierdie afskuwelike drome.

Maar al was ek so doodbang vir die seeman met die afbeen, was ek

vir die kaptein self baie minder bang as al die ander mense wat hom geken het. Dit het soms gebeur, dat hy meer gedrink het as waartoe hy in staat was, en dan het hy die hele aand sy ou goddelose seemansliedjies sit en sing, sonder om hom aan enige mens te steur. Party aande het hy drank vir die hele geselskap bestel en al die verskrikte gaste gedwing om na sy stories te luister en die koor van sy liedjies saam te sing. Meer as een maal het die huis gedreun van Jo-ho-ho, en n bottel vol rum.

Almal sing maar saam, met die doodsangs op hulle gesig, en uit pure benoudheid wou die een harder skree as die ander, want in son bui was hy die wreedaardigste vent wat n mens jou kan voorstel. Hy stamp op die tafel dat almal moet stilbly; hy gaan te kere soos n gek mens as iemand hom iets vra, of anders juis omdat niemand iets se nie, en hy dink dat die geselskap nie na hom luister nie. En geen mens durf dit waag om die herberg te verlaat, voordat die woestaard hom vaak gedrink, en bed toe geslinger het nie.

Sy verhale het die arme mense die dood op die lyf gejaag. Dit was aaklige stories van mense wat opgehang is, of wat geblinddoek oor n plank die see moes inloop, van storms op see, en woeste dade en plekke in die Spaanse see. Volgens sy eie woorde moes hy glo sy lewe verslyt het onder die gemeentse skuim wat die Here ooit op die see toegelaat het. En die taal waarin hy daardie stories opdis, het ons eenvoudige dorpsbewoners byna

net soveel gewalg as die misdade waarvan hy vertel het. My vader het dikwels gesê dat die herberg tot niet sou gaan, want die mense sou gou moeg word om daarheen te kom net om doodgeskreeu te word, en met die bewerasie op die lyf bed toe te gaan; maar ek dink regtig dat sy teenwoordigheid vir ons voordelig was. Solank as hy vertel het, was die mense wel n bietjie bang, maar naderhand was dit tog vir hulle mooi. Dit was n goeie afwis-seling in hulle eentonige lewe; en daar was selfs party van die jongmense wat voorgegee het dat hulle van hom hou. Hulle noem hom „n egte seerot, en „n ware ou pikbroek, en dan het hulle daarby gevoeg dat dit manne soos hy is wat die naam van Engeland hoog hou op see.

En tog het hy ons byna bankrot gemaak; want hy bly maar by ons week in en week uit, en maand na maand, sodat sy geld al lankal op was, en tog het my vader nooit die moed gehad om meer te vra nie. Sodra hy dit waag om daar iets van te se dan het die ou kaptein net deur sy neus gesnuif, n mens kan amper se brul, totdat my arme vader die kamer moes verlaat. Ek het meer as een maal gesien hoe hy sy hande loop en vrywe na son afjak, en ek is seker dat die angs en die kwellings wat hy moes deurstaan sy ontydige dood verhaas het.

Gedurende die tyd dat die kaptein by ons tuis was, het hy nooit ander klere aangetrek nie, behalwe eenkeer toe hy n paar nuwe kouse

van n smous gekoop het. Toe die rand van sy hoed eenkant stukkend gaan, het hy dit net so laat hang, hoewel dit baie hinderlik was as die wind gewaai het. Ek onthou nog hoe sy baadjie daar uitgesien het. Hy het dit altyd self heelgemaak in sy kamer, en dit was naderhand net een lap op die ander. Hy het nooit n brief geskrywe nie, en ook nooit een ontvang nie. Hy het nooit met iemand gepraat nie, behalwe met die bure, en dan ook net as hy te veel rum gedrink het. Die groot seekis is nooit deur een van ons nog oop gesien nie.

Net een man het hom eenkeer woedend gemaak. Dit was teen die einde, toe my arme vader al op sy uiterste gele het aan die toring. Dr. Livesey het een middag na sy pasd'ent kom kyk, en nadat my moeder hom n stukkie te ete gegee het, gaan hy n pypie rook in die voorkamer, solank as sy perd gehaal word van die dorp af, want by ons was nie n stal nie. Ek het hom daarheen vergesel, en ek onthou nog goed hoe die deftig geklede dokter, met spierwit pruik, sy helder swart oë en aangename maniere afgesteek het by die lomp mense van daardie buurt, en veral by ons seerot wat daar soos n groot smerige voël-verskrikker halfdronk, met sy elmboë op die tafel gesit het.

Skielik begin hy die kaptein sy ewige ou liedjie te sing:

Vyftien man op die Dooie se kis,

Jo-ho-ho, en n bottel vol rum,

Vra Drank en die Duiwel waar die ander is, Jo-ho-ho, en n bottel vol rum.

Ek het eers altyd gedink dat die Dooie se kis niks anders was as daardie groot kis van die kaptein wat op solder staan nie, en die gedagte was altyd in my drome deurmekaar gevleg met die afbeen-seeman. Maar ons was almal lankal gewoon aan die ou liedjie en niemand het daar die minste ag meer op geslaan nie. Vir Dr. Livesey alleen was dit iets nuuts, en ek kon sien dat dit op hom glad nie n aangename indruk gemaak het nie, want hy kyk vererg op, en bly n rukkie stil, voordat hy weer sy gesprek met ou Taylor, die tuinier, oor n nuwe middel teen rumatiek voortsit.

Die kaptein het op maat van sy eie musiek vroliker begin word en het meteens n geweldige hou met sy vuus op die tafel voor hom geslaan. Ons het almal geweet dit beteken: stilte! Almal bly toe ook dadelik stil, behalwe Dr. Livesey. Hy hou maar aan met praat, duidelik en vriendelik, soos gewoonlik, en nou en dan trek hy aan sy pyp, so tussen die woorde deur.

Die kaptein kyk hom venynig aan, stamp weer n slag op die tafel, kyk nog kwaai, en skreeu toe met gemene vloekwoord: Stilte daar tussendeke!

Praat u met my, meneer? vra die dokter. En toe die ou woestaard met nog n vloek daarop ja gesê het, sê die dokter: Ek wil jou net een

ding se, en dit is, as jy so aanhou met drink, sal die wêreld gou verlos wees van n baie groot smeerlap!

Dit was vreeslik om die woede van die ou kereel te sien. Hy spring op, haal n seeman se knipmes te voorskyn, en dreig om die dokter daarmee teen die muur vas te pen.

Dr. Livesey verroer hom nie. Hy praat soos voorheen, oor sy skouer en op dieselfde bedaarde manier, net n bietjie harder, sodat almal in die kamer dit kon verstaan: As jy nie dadelik daardie mes in jou sak steek nie, beloof ek jou, op my woord van eer, dat jy met die eersvolgende hofsitting gehang sal word.

Hulle koeël mekaar met die oë; maar die kaptein het gou ingegee, sy mes in die skede gestee, en weer op sy plek gaan sit, waar hy brom soos n hond wat n pak slae gekry het.

En nou, meneer, se die dokter, nou dat ek weet daar loop son vent soos jy in die distrik rond, kan jy seker wees dat ek jou dag en nag in die oog sal laat hou. Ek is nie net n dokter nie, ek is ook n magistraat; en as ek die minste klagte oor jou hoor, al is dit maar net dat jy weer so onbeskof was, soos vanaand, sal ek sorg, dat jy hier uitgejaag word. Laat dit vir jou genoeg wees.

Kort daarna het Dr. Livesey se perd gekom, en hy het weggery; maar die kaptein was die hele aand doodstil, en nog baie aande daarna ook.

# Chapter 2

## Black Dog Appears and Disappears

IT was not very long after this that there occurred the first of the mysterious events that rid us at last of the captain, though not, as you will see, of his affairs. It was a bitter cold winter, with long, hard frosts and heavy gales; and it was plain from the first that my poor father was little likely to see the

spring. He sank daily, and my mother and I had all the inn upon our hands, and were kept busy enough without paying much regard to our unpleasant guest.

It was one January morning, very early—a pinching, frosty morning—the cove all grey with hoar-frost, the ripple lapping softly on the stones, the sun still low and only touching the hilltops and shining far to seaward. The captain had risen earlier than usual and set out down the beach, his cutlass swinging under the broad skirts of the old blue coat, his brass telescope under his arm, his hat tilted back upon his head. I remember his breath hanging like smoke in his wake as he strode off, and the last sound I heard of him as

he turned the big rock was a loud snort of indignation, as though his mind was still running upon Dr. Livesey.

Well, mother was upstairs with

father and I was laying the breakfast-table against the captain's return when the parlour door opened and a man stepped in on whom I had never set my eyes before. He was a pale, tallowy creature, wanting two

fingers of the left hand, and though he wore a cutlass, he did not look much like a fighter. I had always my eye open for seafaring men, with one leg or two, and I remember this one puzzled me. He was not sailorly, and

yet he had a smack of the sea about him too.

I asked him what was for his service, and he said he would take rum; but as I was going out of the room to fetch it, he sat down upon a table and motioned me to draw near. I paused where I was, with my napkin in my hand.

"Come here, sonny," says he. "Come nearer here."

I took a step nearer.

"Is this here table for my mate Bill?" he asked with a kind of leer.

I told him I did not know his mate Bill, and this was for a person who stayed in our house whom we called

the captain.

"Well," said he, "my mate Bill would be called the captain, as like as not. He has a cut on one cheek and a mighty pleasant way with him, particularly in drink, has my mate Bill. We'll put it, for argument like, that your captain has a cut on one cheek—and we'll put it, if you like, that that cheek's the right one. Ah, well! I told you. Now, is my mate Bill in this here house?"

I told him he was out walking. "Which way, sonny? Which way is he gone?"

And when I had pointed out the rock and told him how the captain was

likely to return, and how soon, and answered a few other questions, "Ah," said he, "this'll be as good as drink to my mate Bill."

The expression of his face as he said these words was not at all pleasant, and I had my own reasons for thinking that the stranger was mistaken, even supposing he meant what he said. But it was no affair of mine, I thought; and besides, it was difficult to know what to do. The stranger kept hanging about just inside the inn door, peering round

the corner like a cat waiting for a mouse. Once I stepped out myself into the road, but he immediately

called me back, and as I did not obey quick enough for his fancy, a most horrible change came over his tallowy face, and he ordered me in with an oath that made me jump. As soon as I was back again he returned to his former manner, half fawning, half sneering, patted me on the shoulder, told me I was a good boy and he had taken quite a fancy to me. "I have a son of my own," said he, "as like you as two blocks, and he's all the pride of my 'art. But the great thing for boys is discipline, sonny—discipline. Now, if you had sailed along of Bill, you wouldn't have stood there to be spoke to twice—not

you. That was never Bill's way, nor the way of sich as sailed with him. And here, sure enough, is my mate Bill, with a spy-glass under his arm, bless his old 'art, to be sure. You

and me'll just go back into the parlour, sonny, and get behind the door, and we'll give Bill a little surprise—bless his 'art, I say again." So saying, the stranger backed along with me into the parlour and put me behind him in the corner so that we were both hidden by the open door. I was very uneasy and alarmed, as you may fancy, and it rather added to my fears to observe that the stranger

was certainly frightened himself. He

cleared the hilt of his cutlass and loosened the blade in the sheath; and all the time we were waiting there

he kept swallowing as if he felt what we used to call a lump in the throat. At last in strode the captain,

slammed the door behind him, without looking to the right or left, and marched straight across the room to where his breakfast awaited him.

"Bill," said the stranger in a voice that I thought he had tried to make bold and big.

The captain spun round on his heel and fronted us; all the brown had gone out of his face, and even his nose was blue; he had the look of a man who sees a ghost, or the evil one, or something worse, if anything can be; and upon my word, I felt sorry to see him all in a moment turn so old and sick.

"Come, Bill, you know me; you know an old shipmate, Bill, surely," said the stranger.

The captain made a sort of gasp. "Black Dog!" said he.

"And who else?" returned the other, getting more at his ease. "Black Dog as ever was, come for to see his old shipmate Billy, at the Admiral Benbow inn. Ah, Bill, Bill, we have seen a sight of times, us two, since I

lost them two talons," holding up his mutilated hand.

"Now, look here," said the captain; "you've run me down; here I am; well, then, speak up; what is it?" "That's you, Bill," returned Black Dog, "you're in the right of it, Billy. I'll have a glass of rum from this dear child here, as I've took such a liking to; and we'll sit down, if you please, and talk square, like old shipmates."

When I returned with the rum, they were already seated on either side of the captain's breakfast-table—Black Dog next to the door and sitting sideways so as to have one eye on

his old shipmate and one, as I thought, on his retreat.

He bade me go and leave the door wide open. "None of your keyholes for me, sonny," he said; and I left them together and retired into the bar.

"For a long time, though I certainly did my best to listen, I could hear nothing but a low gattling; but at last the voices began to grow higher, and I could pick up a word or two, mostly oaths, from the captain.

"No, no, no, no; and an end of it!" he cried once. And again, "If it comes

to swinging, swing all, say I." Then all of a sudden there was a tremendous explosion of oaths and other noises—the chair and table went over in a lump, a clash of steel

followed, and then a cry of pain, and the next instant I saw Black Dog in full flight, and the captain hotly pursuing, both with drawn cutlasses, and the former streaming blood from the left shoulder. Just at the door the captain aimed at the fugitive one last tremendous cut, which would certainly have split him to the chine had it not been

intercepted by our  
big signboard of Admiral Benbow. You may see the notch on the  
lower side of the frame to this day.

That blow was the last of the battle.

Once out upon the road, Black Dog, in spite of his wound, showed a  
wonderful clean pair of heels and disappeared over the edge of the hill  
in half a minute. The captain, for his part, stood staring at the  
signboard like a bewildered man. Then he passed his hand over his  
eyes

several times and at last turned back into the house.

"Jim," says he, "rum"; and as he spoke, he reeled a little, and caught  
himself with one hand against the wall.

"Are you hurt?" cried I.

"Rum," he repeated. "I must get away from here. Rum! Rum!"

I ran to fetch it, but I was quite unsteadied by all that had fallen out,  
and I broke one glass and fouled the tap, and while I was still getting  
in my own way, I heard a loud fall in the parlour, and running in,  
beheld the captain lying full length upon the floor. At the same instant  
my mother, alarmed by the cries and fighting, came running  
downstairs to help me. Between us we raised his head. He was  
breathing very loud and hard, but his eyes were closed and his  
face a horrible colour.

"Dear, deary me," cried my mother, "what a disgrace upon the house!  
And your poor father sick!"

In the meantime, we had no idea what to do to help the captain, nor  
any other thought but that he had got his death-hurt in the scuffle  
with the stranger. I got the rum, to be sure, and tried to put it down  
his throat,

but his teeth were tightly shut and his jaws as strong as iron. It was a  
happy relief for us when the door opened and Doctor Livesey came in,  
on his visit to my father.

"Oh, doctor," we cried, "what shall we do? Where is he wounded?"

"Wounded? A fiddle-stick's end!" said the doctor. "No more wounded  
than you or I. The man has had a stroke, as I warned him. Now, Mrs.

Hawkins, just you run upstairs to your husband and tell him, if  
possible, nothing about it. For my part, I must do my best to save this  
fellow's trebly worthless life; Jim, you get me a basin."

When I got back with the basin, the doctor had already ripped up the  
captain's sleeve and exposed his great sinewy arm. It was tattooed in  
several places. "Here's luck," "A fair wind," and "Billy Bones his  
fancy," were very neatly and clearly executed on the forearm; and up  
near the shoulder there was a sketch of a gallows and a man hanging  
from it—done, as I thought, with great spirit.

"Prophetic," said the doctor, touching this picture with his finger.



"And now, Master Billy Bones, if that be your name, we'll have a look at the colour of your blood. Jim," he said, "are you afraid of blood?"

"No, sir," said I.

"Well, then," said he, "you hold the basin"; and with that he took his lancet and opened a vein.

A great deal of blood was taken before the captain opened his eyes and looked mistily about him. First he recognized the doctor with an unmistakable frown; then his glance fell upon me, and he looked relieved. But suddenly his colour

changed, and he tried to raise himself, crying, "Where's Black Dog?"

"There is no Black Dog here," said the doctor, "except what you have on your own back. You have been drinking rum; you have had a stroke, precisely as I told you; and I have just, very much against my own will, dragged you headforemost out of the grave. Now, Mr. Bones —"

"That's not my name," he interrupted. "Much I care," returned the doctor. "It's the name of a buccaneer of my acquaintance; and I call you by it for the sake of shortness, and what I

have to say to you is this; one glass

of rum won't kill you, but if you take one you'll take another and another, and I stake my wig if you don't break off short, you'll die—do you understand that?—die, and go to your own place, like the man in the Bible. Come, now, make an effort. I'll help you to your bed for once."

Between us, with much trouble, we managed to hoist him upstairs, and laid him on his bed, where his head fell back on the pillow as if he were almost fainting.

"Now, mind you," said the doctor, "I clear my conscience—the name of rum for you is death."

And with that he went off to see my father, taking me with him by the arm.

"This is nothing," he said as soon as he had closed the door. "I have drawn blood enough to keep him quiet awhile; he should lie for a week where he is—that is the best thing for him and you; but another stroke would settle him."

# Chapter 2

## Black Dog verskyn en verdwyn

Kort hierna het een van daardie geheimsinnige gebeurtenisse plaasgevind wat ons eindelijk van die ou kaptein verlos het, hoewel nog lank nie van sy sake nie. Dit was n bitter koue winter met baie ryp en hewige storms; en dit was van die begin af duidelik dat my arme vader die voorjaar nie sou haal nie. Hy het by die dag afgeneem, en moeder en ek moes nou alleen die herberg behartig; sodat ons te besig was om veel aandag te wy aan ons onaangename gas.

Dit was op n oggend in Januarie, baie vroeg. Dit was n bytende koue, die hele baai het wit van die ryp geleë, die water het liggies aan die klippe gelek en die son het laag gesit en net oor die heuweltoppe sy strale oor die seewater gegooi.

Die kaptein het vroeër as gewoonlik opgestaan en afgestap na die strand toe. Sy mes het heen en weer onder die breë pante van sy ou blou baadjie geswaai; die koperverkyker onder sy arm, en sy hoed agter op sy kop. Ek onthou nog hoe sy asem soos n dun rookwolk agter hom in die koue lug gehang het toe hy so wegstap, en die laaste geluid wat ek gehoor het, was n snork van verontwaardiging toe hy die punt van die groot rots omgaan, net asof hy nog aan Dr. Livesey gedink het.

Moeder was in die kamer by my vader, en ek het net begin tafel dek vir die kaptein se ontbyt, toe die voordeur oopgaan en n man ingestap kom wat ek nog nooit tevore gesien het nie. Hy het n bleek, sieklike gesig gehad, en twee van die vingers aan sy linkerhand het makeer. Alhoewel hy n mes gedra het, het hy glad nie na n vegsman gelyk nie. Ek het my oë altyd goed oop-gehou vir seelui, met een been of twee, maar daar was iets aan hierdie man wat ek nie reg kon verstaan nie. Hy was nie n matroos nie, en tog het hy n mens dadelik aan die see laat dink.

Ek vra hom wat hy wil gebruik, en hy bestel n glas rum; maar toe ek die deur wou uitgaan om dit te haal, gaan sit hy op n tafel en wink vir my om nader te kom. Ek bly staan waar ek was, met die servet nog in my hand.

Kom hier, seuntjie, sê hy. Kom bietjie nader.

Ek gaan n stappie nader.

Word hierdie tafel vir my maat Bill gedek? vra hy, en knip sy oog vir my.

Ek vertel hom toe dat ek sy maat Bill nie ken nie, en dat dit vir iemand gedek word wat by ons tuis is, en wat ons kaptein noem.

„Wel, se hy, dit is heel moontlik dat my maat Bill so genoem word. Hy het n sabelhou oor die een wang, en hy het baie vriendelike maniere, veral as hy dronk is, daardie ou maat van my. Ons sal nou maar sê, as jy nie omgee nie, dat jou kaptein n sny oor sy een wang het, en ons sal maar sê dat dit die regterwang is. So, nou weet jy alles daarvan. Vertel my nou, is my maat Bill in hierdie huis, of is hy nie?

Ek vertel hom dat die kaptein gaan wandel het.

Watter kant uit, ou seun? Sê gou, waar is hy heen?

En toe ek vir hom die rots gewys, en gesê het waarlangs die kaptein waarskynlik sou terugkom, hoe lank dit nog sou duur, en op nog n paar vrae geantwoord het,

sê hy: Nou, hoor, dit sal soos n lekker sopie vir my ou maat smaak.

Die uitdrukking op sy gesig toe hy dit sê, was alles behalwe aangenaam, en ek het rede genoeg gehad om te dink dat hy dit mis het, al sou hy regtig meen wat hy gesê het. Maar dit was nou nie my saak nie, dink ek; en buitendien was dit maar moeilik om te weet wat om te doen. Die vreemdeling bly maar daar staan, in die nabyheid van die voordeur, en elke slag loer hy om die hoek net soos n kat wat n muis wil vang. Een keer gaan ek uit in die straat, maar hy roep my dadelik terug; en toe ek nie gou genoeg na sy sin kom nie, kry hy n afskuwelike trek op sy gesig, en hy gee son lelike vloek dat ek soos die wind by die voordeur inspring. Sodra ek weer in die huis was, word hy weer soos voorheen, half vleierend, half spottend. Hy klop my op die skouer, noem my n goeie seun, en vertel my dat hy baie van my hou. Ek het ook n seuntjie tuis, sê hy, en hy lyk op n druppel water net soos jy. Hy is my oogappel. Maar die vernaamste ding vir n seun is gehoorsaamheid, my kind,

gehoorsaamheid. Nou, as jy ooit saam met Bill op see gewees het, sou jy nie tweemaal met jou laat praat nie, nee, sowaar nie! Dit was nooit Bill se manier nie. En hier, sowaarlikwaar, kom my ou maat Bill aan, met n verkyker onder sy arm, die liewe, goeie siel. Kom ons twee gaan stilletjies agter die deur staan, dan verras ons hom.

Met die woorde trek die vreemdeling my met hom saam die kamer in, en stoot my agter hom in die hoek, sodat ons altwee agter die oop deur staan. Soos te begrype is, het ek baie onrustig en verskrik gevoel, en dit het my nog banger gemaak om te sien watter angs die vreemdeling uitstaan. Hy werk gedurig aan sy mes, en trek dit halfpad uit die skede; en solank as ons daar gestaan het, hou hy aan met sluk, soos een wat n knop in sy keel het.

Eindelik stap die kaptein die kamer in, gooi die voordeur agter hom toe, sonder om regs of links te kyk, en loop reguit op die tafel af waar sy ontbyt vir hom klaar staan.

Bill, sê die vreemdeling, en dit gaan vir my of hy hard sukkel om sy stem te laat grof klink.

Die kaptein draai dadelik om, en kyk ons aan. Al die rooibruin kleur gaan uit sy gesig uit; selfs sy neus word blou. Verstar soos een wat n spook of die duiwel sien, of dalk iets erger indien daar so iets bestaan. Werklik ek het jammer vir hom gevoel; in n enkel oomblik het hy oud en siek geword.

Kom, Bill, jy ken my tog? Jy het tog nie jou ou skeepsmaat vergeet nie?

Black Dog! hyg die kaptein.

En wie anders? vra die vreemdeling, wat nou meer op sy gemak lyk. Black Dog het self gekom om sy ou maat Billy op te soek in die Admiral Benbow. Alle-wêreld, Bill, maar daar het baie water in die see geloop vandat ek hierdie twee kloue verloor het. En hy steek sy verminkte hand op.

Kyk hier, sê die kaptein, jy het my nou raakgeloop; hier is ek. Wat wil jy he?

, Jy s reg, Billy, jys reg; ons sal praat. Hierdie seun, wat ek sommer dadelik liefgekry het, sal vir ons iets bring om te drink, en dan sal ons lekker gesels, soos dit twee ou skeepsmaats betaam.

Hulle het reg teenoor mekaar aan die kaptein se ontbyttafel gesit toe ek met die rum terugkom. Black Dog was naaste aan die deur, en hy sit effens skeep, glo om een oog op sy maat te hou, en die ander op die kans vir vlug.

Hy gebied my om te gaan en die deur wydoop te laat staan. Ek hou niks van sleutelgate nie, hoor! voeg hy daarby. Ek laat die twee toe alleen en gaan terug na die kantien toe.

Ek het natuurlik probeer om te luister, maar vir n lang ruk kon ek niks as net n sagte gemompel uitmaak nie. Naderhand word die stemme al harder, en ek kon so hier en daar n woord opvang, meeste vloekwoorde, wat die kaptein laat val.

Nee, nee, ek sê nee! skree hy. En toe weer: As een moet hang, moet almal hang, sê ek.

En toe skielik was daar n vreeslike rumoer en gevloek, die stoele en tafel word omgesmyt, ek hoor die geklik van staal teen staal, en toe n harde gil. n Oomblik later sien ek Black Dog halsoorkop na die deur se kant toe vlug, en die kaptein agter hom aan. Elkeen het n steekmes in die hand, en uit Black Dog se linker-skouer stroom die bloed. Net by die deur mik die kaptein na hom met die mes, en hy sou hom seker tot in die rugstring gestee het, as die mes nie bly vassit het in ons groot uithangbord voor die deur nie. Tot vandag toe nog sit die keep daar aan die onderkant van die plank.

Dit was die end van die geveg. Toe Black Dog eindelik in die oop straat was, vlieg hy soos die wind oor die aarde, wond en al, en binne n minuut of wat het hy oor die rant verdwyn. Die kaptein bly n ruk versuf staan en kyk na die uithangbord, vee n paar maal met die hand

oor die oë, en eindelik loop hy die huis weer in.

Jim, sê hy, rum en toe hy dit sê, slinger hy son bietjie, en hou met een hand vas aan die muur.

Is u gewónd, kaptein? vra ek.

Rum! sê hy weer. Ek moet maak dat ek hier weg-kom. Rum, rum!

Ek hardloop om dit te haal, maar ek was so ontsteld deur alles wat gebeur het, dat ek eers n glas breek, en toe weer die drank laat uitstort. Toe ek nog so sukkel, hoor ek n harde slag in die voorste kamer, en toe ek daarheen hardloop, sien ek die kaptein, so lank as hy was, op die vloer lê. Op dieselfde oomblik kom my moeder die trap af, want sy het die geskreeu en geveg gehoor. Ons twee saam lig toe sy kop op. Hy het baie swaar asem gehaal, en sy gesig was doodsbleck.

Ag, Vadertjie, kerm my moeder, wat n skande vir ons huis! En jou arme vader le so siek!

Intussen was ons raadop met die kaptein, en ons wis nie beter nie as dat hy n doodsteek in die worsteling met die vreemdeling gekry het. Ek het n bietjie rum gaan haal, en ons het probeer om dit in sy keel af te gooi, maar sy tande was styf opmekaar en sy kakebene so sterk soos yster. Dit was vir ons n groot verligting toe die deur oopgaan en Dr. Livesey inkom om my vader te besoek.

Ag, dokter, roep ons uit, wat moet ons doen? Waar is hy gewond?

Gewond? Gekheid! sê die dokter. Hy is so min gewond as ek of jy. Die man het n aanval van beroerte, net soos ek hom voorspel het. Kyk hier, Mevrouw Hawkins, gaan u nou maar terug na u man toe, en vertel hom, as dit moontlik is, niks. Wat my betref, ek moet my bes doen om hierdie vent se nuttelose lewe te red. Jim, gaan haal jy gou vir my n waskom.

Toe ek terugkom met die waskom het die dokter al die kaptein se mou oopgesny, sodat die groot, gespierde arm ontbloot le. Dit was op verskeie plekke getatoeëer. Op die voorarm was duidelik die woorde Veelsgeluk, „n flinke bries, en Billy Bones se Begeerte te lees. Bo, naby die skouer, was n afbeelding van n galg waaraan n man hang, baie knap en duidelik geteken.

Ja, dit is sy voorland, sê die dokter en wys met sy vinger na hierdie prentjie. En nou, Meneer Billy Bones, as dit jou naam is, ons wil bietjie kyk watter kleur bloed jy het. Jim, is jy bang vir bloed?

Nee, dokter, sê ek.

Nou ja, hou dan bietjie die waskom vas, en toe neem hy sy lanset en maak n aar oop.

n Taamlieke hoeveelheid bloed was al oorgetap voor die kaptein sy oë oopmaak en dromerig rondkyk. Toe hy die dokter herken, irons hy dadelik sy voorkop; maar toe sien hy my raak, en lyk toe weer gerus.

Maar skielik word hy rooi in sy gesig, en hy kom half orent, met die vraag:

Waar is Black Dog?

Daar is geen Black Dog hier nie, sê die dokter, of dit mag die Josie wees wat op jou eie rug sit. Jy het te veel rum gedrink, en nou het jy beroerte gekry, soos ek jou voorspel het. Ek het jou eintlik teen my sin, uit die graf gesleep. Nou, Meneer Bones....

Dit is nie my naam nie, val die kaptein hom in die rede.

Ek gee nie om nie, sê die dokter. Dis die naam van n bekende seerower; en ek sal jou maar kortheds-halwe ook so noem. Wat ek jou eintlik wil sê, is dit: een glas rum sal jou nie doodmaak nie, maar as jy een neem, sal jy ook die tweede neem, en dan n derde, en as jy nie oppas nie gaan jy dood verstaan jy my? dood, en gaan jy na jou bestemde plek, soos die man in die Bybel. Kom aan, probeer om op te staan. Ek sal jou hierdie slag bed toe help.

Tussen ons twee, en met groot gesukkel, het ons hom die trap opgekry, en op sy bed neergeleë. Hy laat sy kop dadelik agteroor sak op die kussing asof hy weer wil flou word.

Pas nou op, hoor, sê die dokter. My gewete is rein, ek het jou gewaarsku. Drank sal jou dood beteken.

Met hierdie woorde gaan hy die kamer uit om na my vader te gaan kyk, en hy trek my aan die arm agter hom aan.

Dit is sommer niks, sê hy vir my, sodra die deur agter ons toe was. Ek het genoeg bloed afgetap, om hom vereers stil te hou; hy moet maar agt dae daar lê waar hy is, dit is die beste vir hom en vir julle. Nog son aanval en ek is bevrees dit sal sy einde wees.

# Chapter 3

## The Black Spot

ABOUT noon I stopped at the captain's door with some cooling drinks and medicines. He was lying very much as we had left him, only a little higher, and he seemed both weak and excited.

"Jim," he said, "you're the only one here that's worth anything, and you know I've been always good to you. Never a month but I've given you a silver fourpenny for yourself. And now you see, mate, I'm pretty low, and deserted by all; and Jim, you'll bring me one noggin of rum, now, won't you, matey?"

"The doctor—" I began.

But he broke in cursing the doctor, in a feeble voice but heartily. "Doctors is all swabs," he said; "and that doctor there, why, what do he know about seafaring men? I been in places hot as pitch, and mates dropping round with Yellow Jack, and the blessed land a-heaving like the sea with earthquakes—what to the doctor know of lands like that?—and

I lived on rum, I tell you. It's been meat and drink, and man and wife, to me; and if I'm not to have my rum now I'm a poor old hulk on a lee shore, my blood'll be on you, Jim, and that doctor swab"; and he ran on

again for a while with curses. "Look, Jim, how my fingers fidges," he continued in the pleading tone. "I can't keep 'em still, not I. I haven't had a drop this blessed day. That doctor's a fool, I tell you. If I don't have a drain o' rum, Jim, I'll have the horrors; I seen some on 'em already. I seen old Flint in the corner there, behind you; as plain as print, I seen him; and if I get the horrors, I'm a man that has lived rough, and I'll raise Cain. Your doctor hisself said one glass wouldn't hurt me. I'll give you a golden guinea for a noggin, Jim."

He was growing more and more excited, and this alarmed me for my father, who was very low that day and needed quiet; besides, I was reassured by the doctor's words, now quoted to me, and rather offended by the offer of a bribe.

"I want none of your money," said I,

"but what you owe my father. I'll get you one glass, and no more."

When I brought it to him, he seized it greedily and drank it out.

"Aye, aye," said he, "that's some better, sure enough. And now, matey,

did that doctor say how long I was to lie here in this old berth?"

"A week at least," said I. "Thunder!" he cried. "A week! I can't do that; they'd have the black spot on me by then. The lubbers is going about to get the wind of me this blessed moment; lubbers as couldn't keep what they got, and

want to nail what is another's. Is that seamanly behaviour, now, I want to

know? But I'm a saving soul. I never wasted good money of mine, nor lost it neither; and I'll trick 'em again. I'm not afraid on 'em. I'll shake out another reef, matey, and daddle 'em again."

As he was thus speaking, he had risen from bed with great difficulty, holding to my shoulder with a grip that almost made me cry out, and moving his legs like so much dead weight. His words, spirited as they were in meaning, contrasted sadly with the weakness of the voice in which they were uttered. He paused when he had got into a sitting position on the edge.

"That doctor's done me," he murmured. "My ears is singing. Lay me back."

Before I could do much to help him he had fallen back again to his former place, where he lay for a while silent.

"Jim," he said at length, "you saw that seafaring man today?"

"Black Dog?" I asked.

"Ah! Black Dog," says he. "HE'S a bad un; but there's worse that put him on. Now, if I can't get away nohow, and they tip me the black spot, mind you, it's my old sea-chest they're

after; you get on a horse—you can, can't you? Well, then, you get on a horse, and go to— well, yes, I will!— to that eternal doctor swab, and tell him to pipe all hands—magistrates and sich—and he'll lay 'em aboard at the Admiral Benbow—all old Flint's crew, man and boy, all on 'em that's left. I was first mate, I was, old Flint's first mate, and I'm the on'y

one as knows the place. He gave it me at Savannah, when he lay a-dying, like as if I was to now, you see. But you won't peach unless they get the black spot on me, or unless you see that Black Dog again or a

seafaring man with one leg, Jim—him above all."

"But what is the black spot, captain?" I asked.

"That's a summons, mate. I'll tell you if they get that. But you keep your weather-eye open, Jim, and I'll share with you equals, upon my honour." He wandered a little longer, his voice growing weaker; but soon

after I had given him his medicine, which he took like a child, with the remark, "If ever a seaman wanted drugs, it's me," he fell at last



into a heavy, swoon-like sleep, in which I left him. What I should have done had all gone well I do not know. Probably I should have told the whole story to the doctor, for I was in mortal fear lest the captain should

repent of his confessions and make an end of me. But as things fell out, my poor father died quite suddenly that evening, which put all other matters on one side. Our natural distress, the visits of the neighbours, the arranging of the funeral, and all the work of the inn to be carried on in the meanwhile kept me so busy that I had scarcely time to think of

the captain, far less to be afraid of him.

He got downstairs next morning, to be sure, and had his meals as usual, though he ate little and had more, I am afraid, than his usual supply of rum, for he helped himself out of the

bar, scowling and blowing through his nose, and no one dared to cross him. On the night before the funeral he was as drunk as ever; and it was shocking, in that house of mourning, to hear him singing away at his ugly old sea-song; but weak as he was, we were all in the fear of death for him, and the doctor was suddenly taken up with a case many miles away and was never near the house after my father's death. I have said the captain was weak, and indeed he seemed rather to grow weaker than regain his strength. He clambered up and down stairs, and went from the parlour to the bar and back again,

and sometimes put his nose out of doors to smell the sea, holding on to the walls as he went for support and breathing hard and fast like a man on a steep mountain. He never particularly addressed me, and it is my belief he had as good as

forgotten his confidences; but his temper was more flighty, and allowing for his bodily weakness, more violent than ever. He had an alarming way now when he was drunk of drawing his cutlass and laying it bare before him on the table. But with all that, he minded people less and seemed shut up in his own thoughts and rather wandering. Once, for instance, to our extreme wonder, he piped up to a different air, a king of country love-song that he must have learned in his youth before he had begun to follow the sea.

So things passed until, the day after the funeral, and about three o'clock of a bitter, foggy, frosty afternoon, I was standing at the door for a moment, full of sad thoughts about my father, when I saw someone drawing slowly near along the road. He was plainly blind, for he tapped before him with a stick and wore a great green shade over his eyes and nose; and he was hunched, as if with

age or weakness, and wore a huge old tattered sea-cloak with a hood that made him appear positively deformed. I never saw in my life a more dreadful-looking figure. He stopped a little from the inn, and

raising his voice in an odd sing-song, addressed the air in front of him, "Will any kind friend inform a poor blind man, who has lost the precious sight of his eyes in the gracious defence of his native country, England—and God bless

King George!—where or in what part of this country he may now be?"

"You are at the Admiral Benbow, Black Hill Cove, my good man," said I.

"I hear a voice," said he, "a young voice. Will you give me your hand, my kind young friend, and lead me in?"

I held out my hand, and the horrible, soft-spoken, eyeless creature gripped it in a moment like a vise. I

was so much startled that I struggled to withdraw, but the blind man pulled me close up to him with a single action of his arm.

"Now, boy," he said, "take me in to the captain."

"Sir," said I, "upon my word I dare not."

"Oh," he sneered, "that's it! Take me in straight or I'll break your arm." And he gave it, as he spoke, a wrench that made me cry out. "Sir," said I, "it is for yourself I mean. The captain is not what he used to be. He sits with a drawn cutlass. Another gentleman—"

"Come, now, march," interrupted he; and I never heard a voice so cruel, and cold, and ugly as that blind man's. It cowed me more than the pain, and I began to obey him at once, walking straight in at the door and towards the parlour, where our sick old buccaneer was sitting,

dazed with rum. The blind man clung close to me, holding me in one iron

fist and leaning almost more of his weight on me than I could carry.

"Lead me straight up to him, and when I'm in view, cry out, 'Here's a friend for you, Bill.' If you don't, I'll do this," and with that he gave me a twitch that I thought would have made me faint. Between this and that, I was so utterly terrified of the blind beggar that I forgot my terror of the captain, and as I opened the

parlour door, cried out the words he had ordered in a trembling voice.

The poor captain raised his eyes,

and at one look the rum went out of him and left him staring sober.

The expression of his face was not so

much of terror as of mortal sickness. He made a movement to rise, but I

do not believe he had enough force left in his body.

"Now, Bill, sit where you are," said the beggar. "If I can't see, I can hear a finger stirring. Business is business. Hold out your left hand. Boy, take his left hand by the wrist and bring it near to my right."

We both obeyed him to the letter, and I saw him pass something from

the hollow of the hand that held his stick into the palm of the captain's, which closed upon it instantly.

"And now that's done," said the blind man; and at the words he suddenly left hold of me, and with incredible accuracy and nimbleness, skipped out of the parlour and into the road, where, as I still stood motionless, I could hear his stick go tap-tap-tapping into the distance.

It was some time before either I or the captain seemed to gather our senses, but at length, and about at the same moment, I released his wrist, which I was still holding, and he drew in his hand and looked sharply into the palm.

"Ten o'clock!" he cried. "Six hours. We'll do them yet," and he sprang to his feet.

Even as he did so, he reeled, put his hand to his throat, stood swaying for a moment, and then, with a peculiar sound, fell from his whole height face foremost to the floor.

I ran to him at once, calling to my mother. But haste was all in vain. The captain had been struck dead by thundering apoplexy. It is a curious thing to understand, for I had certainly never liked the man, though of late I had begun to pity him, but as soon as I saw that he was dead, I burst into a flood of tears. It was the second death I had known, and the sorrow of the first was still fresh in my heart.

# Chapter 3

## Die Swart Kol

Teen die middag het ek aan die kaptein se deur geklop en vir hom n koeldrankie geneem. Hy het nog so te sê netso geleë soos ons hom gelaat het, net n bietjie hoër teen die kussings en hy het baie swak en opgewonde sely^-

Jim, het hy gesê, jys die enigste een hier wat iets beteken; en jy weet ek was altyd vir jou goed gewees. Daar het nooit een maand omgegaan nie, of ek het jou n geldstuk gegee om mee te maak wat jy wil. En nou, kyk hier, maat, ek lê hier magteloos en deur almal verlate; jy sal my tog n glasie rum bring, Jim, net een outjie?

Die dokter .... begin ek. Maar hy gaan dadelik aan vloek op die dokter, in n swak stem, maar baie hartlik.

Die dokters is almal kwaksalwers, sê hy, en daardie dokter, wat op aarde weet hy nou van seelui? Ek was al in plekke gewees so warm soos n bakoond, waar die matrose soos vlieë gesterf het aan die geelkoors; en waar die grond golwe maak soos die see van al die aardbewings, wat weet die ellendige dokter van sulke lande? ek het geleef op rum. Dit was my voedsel en

my drank, vrou en kind vir my, en as ek nou nie n druppel mag kry nie, noudat ek soos n arme ou wrak is wat vaslê aan die strand, sal my bloed op jou hoof wees, Jim, en op daardie kwaksalwer sn.

Hier het die ou sondaar weer aan vloek gegaan, maar naderhand tog n bietjie bedaar en my smekend aange-kyk. Kyk, Jim, hoe bewe my vingers, sê hy. Ek kan hulle nie stil hou nie, op my woord ek kan nie. Ek het die hele dag nog nie n druppel oor my lippe gehad nie. Ek sê vir jou, Jim, daardie dokter is gek. As ek nie gou n slukkie rum kry nie, dan kry ek die homes. Ek het party van hulle al gesien, Jim. Ou Flint het daar in die hoek agter jou gestaan, net so duidelik as toe hy geleef het. As ek die horries kry glo vir my, ek het n goddelose lewe agter die rug, ek sal soos die duiwel self wees. Jou dokter het self gesê dat een glasie my nie sal kwaaddoen nie. Ek sal jou n goue pond gee vir n glasvol, Jim.

Hy word al hoe meer opgewonde, en ek was bang dat sy geraas my vader wat uiters swak was en rus nodig had, sou ontstel. Buitendien was ek gerusgestel deur die dokter se woorde, sodat ek n bietjie beledig gevoel het dat die ou man my wou omkoop.

Ek wil nie jou geld hê nie, sê ek, net die wat jy my vader skuld. Ek sal vir jou een glas rum bring, maar niks meer nie.

Toe ek dit vir hom bring, gryp hy dit ongeduldig en drink dit uit.

A, dit doen n mens goed, sug hy. En nou, matie, hoe lank het daardie ellendeling van n dokter gesê moet ek nog in hierdie ou kajuit le?

„n Week op die minste, sê ek.

„n Week! hy is rasend, dit mag nie, ek kan nie dit doen nie, teen daardie tyd sou hulle al die „Swart Kol vir my gebring het. Daardie landrotte is nou al op my

spoor. Ellendeling! Hulle kon nie hou wat hulle het nie, en nou wil hulle n ander sn ook inpalm. Is dit nou reg? Ek is n spaarsame mens. Ek het nooit my geld vermors nie, en dit ook nooit verloor nie; en ek sal hulle weer kul. Ek is nie bang vir hulle nie. Ek sal maar weer n ander koers uit vaar, matie, en weer sand in hulle oë strooi.

Onder die praat het hy met groot moeite van die bed afgeklim, en daar aan my skouer gestaan en vasklou, so styf dat ek amper van pyn geskreeu het. Sy voete het soos swaar gewigte heen-en-weer oor die vloer gesleep. Sy geesdriftige woorde het n kontras gevorm met die swak stem wat dit ge-uiter het. Hy gaan sit weer op die rand van die katel. Daardie dokter het my klaarge-maak, se hy hygend. My ore suis. Lê my weer neer. Voordat ek hom nog kon kelp, het hy teruggeval op sy plek, en daar n rukkie doodstil bly lê.

Jim, sê hy eindelijk, het jy daardie matroos vandag goed beskou?

Black Dog? vra ek.

Ja, Black Dog. Hy is sleg genoeg, maar die wat hom aanhits, is nog slegter. Nou ja, as ek nou glad nie wegkom nie, en hulle kom die „Swart Kol aflewer, onthou dan, Jim, dat hulle my ou seekis wil hê. Dan klim jy op n perd jy kan mos perdry, nie waar nie? en jy ry na daardie smeerlap van n dokter toe, en sê vir hom hy moet al sy manskappe bring ek meen magistrate en sulke goed en dan kan hy die hele spul vang hier in die ou Admiral Benbow Ou Flint se hele bemanning ten minste almal wat oorgebly het. Ek was Flint se eerste stuurman, weet jy, en ek is die enigste wat weet waar die plek is. Hy het dit vir my gegee op Savannah, toe hy op sterwe gelê het. Maar jy hoef hulle nie aan te klai voor hulle die „Swart Kol vir my gebring het nie, hoor, as jy daardie Black Dog weer sien, of n seeman met een been. Vir hom moet jy veral dophou, Jim. Maar wat is die „Swart Kol, kaptein? vra ek.

Dit is my dagvaarding, maat. Ek sal jou vertel as hulle dit vir my stuur. Maar hou goed wag, Jim, en ek sal met jou gelykop deel.

Hy praat nog n rukkie so voort, alles deurmekaar, en sy stem word al hoe swakker. Maar toe ek vir hom sy medisyne gee, drink hy dit so gehoorsaam soos n kind, met die woorde: As daar ooit n seeman was wat drankies nodig had dan was dit ek. En toe val hy in n swaar, koorsagtige slaap, waarin ek hom toe laat le. Ek weet nie wat ek sou

gedoen het as alles goed afgeloop het nie. Waarskynlik sou ek die hele geskiedenis aan die dokter vertel het; want ek was in doodse benoudheid dat die kaptein dalk sou spyt kry van sy ontboeseming, en my uit die weg sou ruim.

Maar my arme vader is dieselfde aand skielik dood, en dit het alle ander sake uit my gedagte geskuif. Die rou waarin ons gedompel was, die besoeke van die bure, die voorbereidsels vir die begrafnis, by al die gewone werk in die herberg wat tog aldag gedoen moes word, het my so aan die gang gehou, dat ek skaars tyd gekry het om aan die kaptein te dink, of bang vir hom te wees.

Tot my verbasing verskyn die sieke die volgende more aan die ontbyttafel. Hy het maar baie min geëet, en meer as sy gewone taks gedrink, want hy het agter die toonbank ingegaan en homself gehelp, met n irons op sy gesig en n gruwelike geblaas deur sy neus, sodat niemand dit gewaag het om met hom te praat nie.

Die aand voor die begrafnis was hy so dronk soos nooit tevore nie; en dit was vreeslik om hom sy ewige ou seeliedjie te hoor sing in die huis na my vader se dood. So swak soos hy was, het ons almal vir hom son vrees gehad soos vir die dood self, en die dokter was skielik weggeroep na n geval myle ver van ons af, sodat hy nooit naby die herberg gekom het ná my vader se dood nie.

Soos ek sê, die kaptein was swak; en n mens kon sien dat sy kragte by die dag afneem. Hy het die trap op en af geklouter en soms sy neus by die deur uitgesteek om die koel seelug in te asem, maar hy was so swak dat hy aan die muur moes vashou, en sy asem was swaar en gejaag soos die van iemand wat n steil berg uitgeklim het.

Hy het nooit eintlik met my gepraat nie, en ek glo dat hy heeltemal vergeet het dat hy my soveel van sy sake vertel het; maar hy was meer opvlieënd as ooit, en seker baie woester. Hy het nou die nare gewoonte gehad, as hy drank was, om sy mes uit te haal en dit oop en bloot voor hom op die tafel neer te le. Maar tog het hy hom nou minder aan die mense gesteur, en dit lyk of hy gedurig in gedagte versionke was. Een keer, byvoorbeeld, het hy tot ons verbasing n ander deuntjie begin, n soort minneliedjie, wat hy seker in sy jong dae geleer het voordat hy matroos geword het.

Die dag na die begrafnis dit was omtrent drie-uur, dit was bitter koue, en mistige weer staan ek n oomblikkie by die deur om lug te skep. Vol droewige gedagtes aan my pas oorlede vader, kyk ek die straat af, toe ek iemand langsaam sien naderkom. Hy was blind, dit was duidelik, want hy voel voor hom uit met n stok, en oor sy oë en neus had hy n groot groen klep, en hy loop inmekaar soos n ou mens of een wat siek is. Hy had n verslete ou matroosmantel aan, met n soort kappie oor die kop en gesig, wat hom bepaald mismaak laat lyk het. Nooit tevore het ek n persoon teëgekom wat my so die skrik op

die lyf geja het nie. n Paar tree van ons voordeur af bly hy staan, en se met n temerige klaagstem:

Is hier miskien n goeie vriend wat n arme blinde man kan reghelp blind omdat hy sy kosbare gesig verloor het in die stryd vir sy vaderland en Koning George, (mag die Here hom behoed!) Vertel my tog waar en in watter deel van die land ek is?

„Jy is by die ,Admiral Benbow, Blackhill Cove, het ek gesê.

Ek hoor n stem, het hy gesê, „n jeugdige stem. Gee my tog jou hand, my liewe jong vriend, en lei my in.

Ek het my hand uitgesteek, en die aaklige blinde skepsel met sy sagte stemmetjie het dit dadelik so vas gegryp asof in n slagyster. Ek het so geskrik dat ek gespartel het om los te kom, maar die blinde man het my met een swaai van sy arm teen hom aangedruk. Nou, seun, se hy, bring my by die kaptein!

Nee, dit mag ek nie doen nie op my woord nie! O, so! se hy met n grynsag, staan sake so? Neem my dadelik in of ek breek jou arm.

En hy gee my arm n draai wat my laat skreeu van Pyn-

Meneer, se ek, dis om jou ontwil wat ek bang is om dit te waag. Die kaptein is nie meer soos voorheen nie. Hy sit met sy mes oop voor hom op die tafel. Hier was al n ander man ook ....

Komaan stap! val hy my in die rede, en ek het nog nooit in my lewe son koue, wrede, nare stem ge-hoor soos daardie blinde man sn nie. Dit het my dadelik gedwing om hom te gehoorsaam, nog eerder as die pyn in my arm dit sou gedoen het. Ek stap reguit met hom na die agterkamer toe waar ons ou seerower siek en half besope gesit het. Die blinde man hou my met n klou soos yster vas, en leun so swaar op my dat ek amper beswyk het.

Bring my tot by hom, en as ek vlak voor hom staan, se jy hardop; ,Hier is n vriend van jou, Bill. As jy dit nie doen nie, sal ek... en hy gee my arm n draai dat ek byna flou word van pyn. Ek was so bang vir die blinde man dat ek my ontsag vir die kaptein vergeet, en sommer dadelik die woorde met n bewende stem uitgeroep het.

Die arme ou kaptein het opgekyk, en was op die oomblik nugter. Hy het soos n man wat sterf gelyk. Hy maak of hy wil opstaan, maar ek glo nie hy had genoeg krag in sy liggaam nie.

Sit, Bill, sit net waar jy is, se die bedelaar. Ek kan nie sien nie, maar ek kan hoor as jy n vinger verroer. Steek uit jou regterhand. Vat sy regterhand by die pols, seun, en druk dit teen my regterhand.

Ons het altwee gehoorsaam, en toe sien ek dat hy iets uit die holte van sy hand, wat die stok vashou, laat glip in die hand van die kaptein, wat dit dadelik vasklou.

So, nou is dit klaar, se die blinde man. Hy laat my skielik los, en glip so maklik en vinnig tussen die tafel en stoele deur, en by die deur uit,

dat ek hom versuf staan en agterna kyk, tot ek die tok-tok van sy stok in die straat nie meer kon hoor nie.

Dit het n tydjie geduur voor een van ons twee by ons positiewe was. Toe laat ek die kaptein se hand los, wat ek nog altyd vasgehou het, en hy maak sy vingers oop en kyk in die holte van sy hand.

Tienuur! sê hy. Ses uur tyd. Ek sal hulle nog ontsnap, en hy spring op. Maar op dieselfde oomblik slinger hy eenkant toe, gryp met sy hand na sy keel, en val toe met n nare geluid so lank as hy was op die vloer neer.

Ek spring vorentoe om te help, en skree na my moeder. Maar dit was te laat. Die kaptein het n aanval van beroerte gekry en daaronder beswyk. Dis snaaks, ek het nou nooit eintlik van die man gehou nie, al was ek partymaal vir hom jammer gewees, maar toe ek sien dat hy daar dood lê, het ek in trane uitgebars. Dit was die tweede dood en die eerste was nog lou in my herinnering.



# Chapter 4

## The Sea-chest

I LOST no time, of course, in telling my mother all that I knew, and perhaps should have told her long before, and we saw ourselves at once in a difficult and dangerous position. Some of the man's money—if he had any—was certainly due to us, but it was not likely that our captain's shipmates, above all the two specimens seen by me, Black Dog and the blind beggar, would be inclined to give up their booty in payment of the dead man's debts.

The captain's order to mount at once and ride for Doctor Livesey would

have left my mother alone and unprotected, which was not to be thought of. Indeed, it seemed impossible for either of us to remain much longer in the house; the fall of coals in the kitchen grate, the very ticking of the clock, filled us with alarms. The neighbourhood, to our ears, seemed haunted by

approaching footsteps; and what between the dead body of the captain on the parlour floor and the thought

of that detestable blind beggar hovering near at hand and ready to return, there were moments when, as the saying goes, I jumped in my skin for terror. Something must speedily

be resolved upon, and it occurred to us at last to go forth together and seek help in the neighbouring hamlet. No sooner said than done. Bare-headed as we were, we ran out at once in the gathering evening and the frosty fog.

The hamlet lay not many hundred yards away, though out of view, on the other side of the next cove; and what greatly encouraged me, it was in an opposite direction from that whence the blind man had made his appearance and whither he had presumably returned. We were not many minutes on the road, though we sometimes stopped to lay hold of

each other and hearken. But there was no unusual sound—nothing but the low wash of the ripple and the croaking of the inmates of the wood. It was already candle-light when we reached the hamlet, and I shall never forget how much I was cheered to see the yellow shine in doors and windows; but that, as it proved, was

the best of the help we were likely to get in that quarter. For—you would have thought men would have been ashamed of themselves—no soul would consent to return with us to

the Admiral Benbow. The more we told of our troubles, the more—

man, woman, and child— they clung to the shelter of their houses. The name of Captain Flint, though it was strange to me, was well enough known to some there and carried a great weight of terror. Some of the men who had been to field-work on the far side of the Admiral Benbow remembered, besides, to have seen several strangers on the road, and taking them to be smugglers, to have bolted away; and one at least had

seen a little lugger in what we called Kitt's Hole. For that matter, anyone who was a comrade of the captain's was enough to frighten them to death. And the short and the long of the matter was, that while we could get

several who were willing enough to ride to Dr. Livesey's, which lay in another direction, not one would help us to defend the inn.

They say cowardice is infectious; but then argument is, on the other hand, a great emboldener; and so when each had said his say, my mother made them a speech. She would not, she declared, lose money that belonged to her fatherless boy; "If none of the rest of you dare," she said, "Jim and I dare. Back we will go, the way we came, and small thanks to you big, hulking, chicken-hearted men. We'll have that chest open, if we die for it. And I'll thank

you for that bag, Mrs. Crossley, to bring back our lawful money in."

Of course I said I would go with my mother, and of course they all cried out at our foolhardiness, but even then not a man would go along with us. All they would do was to give me a loaded pistol lest we were attacked, and to promise to have horses ready saddled in case we were pursued on our return, while one lad was to ride forward to the doctor's in search of armed assistance.

My heart was beating finely when we two set forth in the cold night upon this dangerous venture. A full

moon was beginning to rise and peered redly through the upper edges of the fog, and this increased our haste, for it was plain, before we came forth again, that all would be

as bright as day, and our departure exposed to the eyes of any watchers. We slipped along the hedges, noiseless and swift, nor did we see or hear anything to increase our terrors, till, to our relief, the door of the Admiral Benbow had closed behind us.

I slipped the bolt at once, and we stood and panted for a moment in the dark, alone in the house with the dead captain's body. Then my mother

got a candle in the bar, and holding each other's hands, we advanced into the parlour. He lay as we had left him, on his back, with his eyes open and one arm stretched out.

"Draw down the blind, Jim," whispered my mother; "they might come and watch outside. And now," said she when I had done so, "we have

to get the key off THAT; and who's to touch it, I should like to know!" and she gave a kind of sob as she said the words.

I went down on my knees at once. On the floor close to his hand there was a little round of paper, blackened on the one side. I could not doubt that this was the BLACK SPOT; and taking it up, I found written on the other side, in a very good, clear hand, this short message: "You have till ten tonight."

"He had till ten, Mother," said I; and just as I said it, our old clock began striking. This sudden noise startled us shockingly; but the news was good, for it was only six.

"Now, Jim," she said, "that key." I felt in his pockets, one after another. A few small coins, a thimble, and some thread and big needles, a piece of pigtail tobacco

bitten away at the end, his gully with the crooked handle, a pocket compass, and a tinder box were all that they contained, and I began to despair.

"Perhaps it's round his neck," suggested my mother.

Overcoming a strong repugnance, I tore open his shirt at the neck, and there, sure enough, hanging to a bit of tarry string, which I cut with his own gully, we found the key. At this triumph we were filled with hope

and hurried upstairs without delay to the little room where he had slept so long and where his box had stood since the day of his arrival.

It was like any other seaman's chest on the outside, the initial "B" burned

on the top of it with a hot iron, and the corners somewhat smashed and broken as by long, rough usage. "Give me the key," said my mother; and though the lock was very stiff,

she had turned it and thrown back the lid in a twinkling.

A strong smell of tobacco and tar rose from the interior, but nothing was to be seen on the top except a suit of very good clothes, carefully brushed and folded. They had never been worn, my mother said. Under that, the miscellany began—a quadrant, a tin canikin, several sticks of tobacco, two brace of very handsome pistols, a piece of bar silver, an old Spanish watch and some other trinkets of little value and mostly of foreign make, a pair of compasses mounted with brass, and five or six curious West Indian shells. I have often wondered since why he should have carried about these shells with him in his wandering, guilty, and hunted life.

In the meantime, we had found nothing of any value but the silver and the trinkets, and neither of these were in our way. Underneath there was an old boat-cloak, whitened with sea-salt on many a harbour-bar. My mother pulled it up with impatience, and there lay before us,

the last things in the chest, a bundle tied up in oilcloth, and looking like papers, and a canvas bag that gave forth, at a touch, the jingle of gold. "I'll show these rogues that I'm an honest woman," said my mother. "I'll have my dues, and not a farthing over. Hold Mrs. Crossley's bag." And she began to count over the amount of the captain's score from the sailor's bag into the one that I was holding.

It was a long, difficult business, for the coins were of all countries and sizes—doubloons, and louis d'ors, and guineas, and pieces of eight, and I know not what besides, all shaken

together at random. The guineas, too, were about the scarcest, and it was with these only that my mother knew how to make her count.

When we were about half-way through, I suddenly put my hand upon her arm, for I had heard in the silent frosty air a sound that brought my heart into my mouth—the tap-tapping of the blind man's stick upon the frozen road. It drew nearer and nearer, while we sat holding our breath. Then it struck sharp on the

inn door, and then we could hear the handle being turned and the bolt rattling as the wretched being tried

to enter; and then there was a long

time of silence both within and without. At last the tapping recommenced, and, to our indescribable joy and gratitude, died slowly away again until it ceased to be heard.

"Mother," said I, "take the whole and let's be going," for I was sure the bolted door must have seemed suspicious and would bring the whole hornet's nest about our ears, though how thankful I was that I had bolted it, none could tell who had never met that terrible blind man. But my mother, frightened as she was, would not consent to take a fraction more than was due to her

and was obstinately unwilling to be content with less. It was not yet seven, she said, by a long way; she knew her rights and she would have them; and she was still arguing with me when a little low whistle sounded a good way off upon the

hill. That was enough, and more than enough, for both of us.

"I'll take what I have," she said, jumping to her feet.

"And I'll take this to square the count," said I, picking up the oilskin packet.

Next moment we were both groping downstairs, leaving the candle by the empty chest; and the next we had

opened the door and were in full retreat. We had not started a moment too soon. The fog was rapidly dispersing; already the moon shone quite clear on the high ground on either side; and it was only in the exact bottom of the dell and round

the tavern door that a thin veil still hung unbroken to conceal the first

steps of our escape. Far less than half-way to the hamlet, very little beyond the bottom of the hill, we must come forth into the moonlight. Nor was this all, for the sound of several footsteps running came already to our ears, and as we looked back in their direction, a light tossing to and fro and still rapidly advancing showed that one of the newcomers carried a lantern.

“My dear,” said my mother suddenly, “take the money and run on. I am going to faint.”

This was certainly the end for both of us, I thought. How I cursed the cowardice of the neighbours; how I blamed my poor mother for her honesty and her greed, for her past foolhardiness and present weakness! We were just at the little bridge, by good fortune; and I helped her, tottering as she was, to the edge of the bank, where, sure enough, she gave a sigh and fell on my shoulder.

I do not know how I found the strength to do it at all, and I am afraid it was roughly done, but I managed to drag her down the bank and a little way under the arch. Farther I could not move her, for the bridge was too low to let me do more than crawl below it. So there we had to stay—my mother almost entirely exposed and both of us within earshot of the inn.

# Chapter 4

## Die Seekis

Natuurlik het ek my moeder dadelik alles vertel. Miskien sou dit beter gewees het as ek dit lankal gedoen het. Ons sien toe duidelik in watter gevaar ons verkeer het. Die oorledene was ons wettig geld verskuldig. Maar, as hy iets agtergelaat het, was dit baie onwaarskynlik dat sy maats daarvan n pennie aan ons sou afgee ten minste as hulle almal so was soos die twee wat ek gesien het, Black Dog en die blinde man. As ek moes doen soos die kaptein gesê het en dadelik na die dokter toe gery het, sou my moeder alleen en onbeskerm moes agterbly, en aan so iets kon ek nie dink nie. Om die waarheid te sê, was dit amper onmoontlik vir een van ons om nog langer in daardie huis te bly, want die geringste geluid, selfs die getik van die klok, het ons laat skrik. Dit was vir ons of ons gedurig voetstappe hoor wat stilletjies naderkom. Die gedagte aan die lyk van die kaptein daar op die kamer se vloer, en die walglike blinde bedelaar wat miskien in die nabyheid van die huis ronddwaal, en enige oomblik kon terugkom, het my hare laat rys van angs. Iets moes dadelik gedoen word, en ons het besluit om te gaan hulp soek in die dorp. Kaalkop het ons twee in die skemeraand uitgehardloop. Die dorp was nie ver nie, net om die eerste draai wat die strand maak, en gelukkig nie in dieselfde rigting wat die blinde man gegaan het nie. Dit het ons maar n paar minute geneem om daar te kom, al het ons n paar

maal op die pad bly staan om mekaar vas te klou en te luister. Die enigste geluide agter ons wat ons gehoor het was die gekabbel van die golfies op die sand, en die geskree van n kraai ęrens in n bos.

Die ligte in die huise het al gebrand toe ons die dorpie inkom, en ek sal nooit vergeet hoe bly ek was om die geel skynsel in deure en vensters te sien nie. Maar dit was dan ook die enigste troos wat ons in daardie dorp sou kry. n Mens sou dink die mans sou hulle skaam om so bang te wees, maar daar was nie een siel onder hulle wat met ons saam terug wou gaan na die Admiral Benbow toe nie. Hoe meer ons vertel van ons moeilikheid, hoe meer hulle almal, man, vrou en kind

vasklou aan die veiligheid van hulle huise. Die naam van kaptein Flint was goed bekend, en toe ons dit noem, was almal vol doodsangs. Party van die mans wat die dag in die veld gewerk het anderkant die Admiral Benbow, het vreemdelinge langs die pad gesien, en het toe dadelik gevlug, want hulle was bang dat dit smokkelaars was. Een man het verklaar dat hy n skuit in Kitts Cove gesien le het. Kortom,

meer as een was gewillig om na Dr. Livesey toe te ry, want die het n ander koers uit gewoon, maar niemand wou met ons saamgaan om die herberg te verdedig nie.

Hulle se lafhartigheid is aansteeklik; maar dit gee n mens moed om die gevaar te bespreek. Toe hulle nou almal klaar was met praat, het my moeder hulle vertel wat sy van hulle dink. Sy kon nie die geld verloor wat haar vaderlose kind toekom nie, se sy, en as julle almal te bang is, sal Jim en ek dit alleen waag. Ons sal teruggaan soos ons gekom het, dis n skande vir julle groot, lui, lafhartige mans. Ons gaan daardie seekis van die ou kaptein oopmaak, al kos dit ons lewe. Leen my asseblief daardie sak, Mevrouw Crossley, om die geld in te bere wat ons wettig toekom.

Natuurlik het ek gesê ek gaan saam met my moeder; en natuurlik het almal gesê on is waaghalse; maar selfs toe het niemand aangebied om saam te gaan nie. Een van hulle het my n gelaaide rewolwer gegee, ingeval ons miskien aangeval word. Hulle belowe ook om twee perde klaar opgesaal te hou, as ons miskien agtervolg word met die terugkoms. Een van die seuns sou na Dr. Livesey toe ry om gewapende hulp te kry.

My hart het vinnig geklop toe ons twee in die koue nag uitgaan op ons gevaarlike onderneming. Dit was voile maan, en die boonste randjie van die misbank het al rooi begin word, sodat dit gou so helder lig soos dag sou wees. Ons was baie haastig om terug te wees solank as dit nog donker was, want wie weet watter nuuskierige oë daar miskien vir ons le en loer het?

Stilletjies en vinnig glip ons langs die heinings verby, en gelukkig sonder om iets verder te sien of te hoor wat ons kon laat skrik het.

Maar, o, dit was n verligting toe die deur van die Admiral Benbow agter ons toeval! Ek sluit dit dadelik toe en vir n oomblik staan ons albei daar in die donker en hyg na asem, met die ou kaptein se lyk alleen in die huis. Toe gaan haal my moeder n kers in die kantien, en hand aan hand gaan ons in die agterkamer in. Hy le net soos ons hom gelaat het, op sy rug, met oop oë, en een arm uitgestrek.

Trek af die Windings, Jim, fluister my moeder; hulle kan dalk buite staan en loer.... En nou, se sy, nadat ek dit gedoen het, moet ons die sleutel sock. En wie sal daaraan vat, wil ek graag weet! Sy gee son halwe snik, en ek val dadelik op my knie'é langs die lyk. Op die vloer by sy hand was n klein ronde stukkie papier, swartgemaak aan eenkant. Dit is natuurlik die Swart Kol, dink ek, en toe ek dit omkeer, lees ek aan die anderkant hierdie woorde, in n goeie duidelike skrif geskrywe: Jy het tyd tot tienuur vanaand.

Hy het uitstel tot tienuur, moeder, se ek; en net toe ek dit gesê het, begin die ou huisklok te slaan. Die skielike geluid het ons geweldig laat skrik, maar dit was goeie nuus, want dit was nog maar sesuur.

Nou, Jim, se sy, soek die sleutel. Ek het sy sakke een na die ander deurgesoek. Al wat ek kry, was n paar geldstukkies, n vingerhoed, naald en garing, n stuk pruimtabak, waarvan een punt afgekou was, sy mes met die krom hef, n sakkompas, en n tonteldoos. Ek wou dit net opgee, toe my moeder se:

Dalk is dit om sy nek.

Ek hou my sterk en trek die hemp oop op sy bors, en waarlik, daar hang die sleutel aan n smerige stukkie band, wat ek met sy eie mes lossny. Ons was nou weer vol moed, en ons gaan toe sonder uitstel die trap op na die kamertjie toe waar hy so lank geslaap het, en waar sy kis nog altyd staan vandat hy daar aangekom het.

Buitekant was daar niks besonders aan te sien nie. Dit was n gewone seemanskis, met die letter B op die deksel ingebrand met n warm yster, en die hoeke gebult en afgeslyt, asof dit al baie moes uitstaan.

Gee my die sleutel, se my moeder. Die slot was stram, maar sy het baie gou oopgekry, en die deksel opgelig.

n Sterk reuk van tabak en teer kom daaruit, en bo-op le n baie goeie pak klere, netjies opgevou. Dit was splinternuut, het my moeder gesê nog nooit gedra nie. Onder die klere was daar n deurmekaar spul goed, n hoekmeter, n blikkantientjie, n paar stukke tabak, twee paar mooi pistole, n staaf silwer, n ou Spaanse oorlosie, en n paar kleinighede van min waarde en wat lyk of dit uit vreemde lande kom, n kompas met koperbeslag, en n stuk of vyf wonderlike Wes-indiese skulpe. Waar-om hy hierdie mooi skulpe met hom saamgeneem het op sy goddelose swerftogte, het my dikwels tot bepein-sing gedwing en ek kon dit nooit verstaan nie.

Ondertussen het ons niks van enige waarde gekry nie, behalwe die staaf silwer en die kleinigheidjes wat vir ons nie juis van enige waarde was nie. Daaronder was n ou seebaadjie, wit van die seewater, en verslyt deur baie dra. My moeder het dit ongeduldig uit die kis uitgepluk, en daar het die laaste twee voorwerpe geleë, n pak goed wat lyk soos papiere in seildoek toegedraai en n growwe linnesak wat die geklingel van goudstukke laat hoor toe ons dit optel.

Ek sal die vabonde wys ek is n eerlike vrou, het my moeder gesê. Ek sal neem wat my toekom, en niks meer nie. Hou Mevrouw Crossley se handsak. En sy begin die bedrag wat die kaptein ons skuld oor te tel in die handsak wat ek vashou.

Dit was n moeilike werk en het baie langsaam ge-gaan, want die geldstukke was uit al die lande van die wêreld afkomstig en allerhande groottes doebloene, en lous dor, en ghienies en Spaanse dollars, en ek weet nie wat alles nie, deurmekaar geskud. Die ghienies was ongelukkig skaarser as al die ander, en dit was net met hulle wat moeder kon uitwerk wat ons toekom.

Toe ons omtrent halfpad klaar getel was, gryp ek haar skielik aan



die arm, ant ek het in die stil, koue naglug n geluid gehoor wat my hart in my keel gejaag het dit was die tok-tok van die blinde man se stok op die harde pad voor ons deur. Die geluid kom al nader, en ons hou ons asem op van angs. Toe kom daar n geweldige slag aan die voordeur, en ons kon hoor hoe iemand aan die knop draai, en hoe die deur skud soos die ellendeling probeer om in te kom. Toe was daar lank stilte, binne en buite. Daarna begin die tok-tok weer, en tot ons onbeskryflike vreugde sterf dit lansaam weg tot ons dit nie meer kon hoor nie.

Moeder, smee ek, neem die hele sak en laat ons vlug. Want ek voel seker die die blinde man agterdog gekry het omdat die deur op slot was, en dat hy gou die hele rowersbende met hom saam sou terugbring. En tog, geen mens kan verstaan hoe dankbaar ek gevoel het dat ek daardie deur vas gegrendel het nie!

Maar my moeder, so bang soos sy was, wou nie daarvan hoor om n pennie meer te neem as wat haar toekom nie. En net so min wou sy tevrede wees met n pennie minder. Dit was nog lank nie seweur nie, het sy gese; reg was reg, ensovoorts. Sy was nog aan praat toe ons n fluitjie saggies hoor blaas na die heuwel se kant toe, wat n hele ent daarvandaan was. Dit was genoeg, en meer as genoeg, vir ons albei.

Ek sal neem wat ek het,, sê sy, en spring dadelik op.

En ek neem hierdie pak goed vir die som wat kort-kom, sê ek.

n Oomblik later gaan ons voel-voel in die donker die trap af. Die kers laat ons net so staan by die leë kis. En toe glip ons by die deur uit en hardloop vir ons lewe. Dit was nie n sekonde te vroeg nie. Die mis was al byna opgeklaar, en die maan skyn helder teen die rante en weerskante van die laagte waar ons huis staan. Lank voor ons die dorpie kon bereik, sou ons in die voile maanlig moes loop. En dit was nog nie die ergste nie; ons hoor duidelik die geluid van verskeie voetstappe wat nader kom, en toe ons omkyk, sien ons dat een van die mense n lantern dra.

My kind, sê my moeder opeens, neem die geld en hardloop alleen verder. Ek word flou.

Nou was dit met ons albei gedaan, dog ek. Hoe het ek die bure nie verwens vir hulle lafhartigheid nie, en my arme moeder in stilte verwyt dat sy eers so-eerlik was en toe darem so gierig, eers so dwaas om ons lewe in gevaar te bring, en nou skielik so swak! Gelukkig was ons net by die bruggie; en ek had net tyd om haar tot by die wal van die sloot te help, toe sy n sug gee en immekaar sak met haar kop op my skouer. Ek weet nie waar ek die krag vandaan gehaal het nie, en ek vrees dit het nie baie maklik gegaan nie; maar ek het dit tog reggekry om haar die wal af te sleep, en n eintjie onder die brug in. Verder kon ek haar nie kry nie, want die brug was so laag, dat ek op hande en voete daaronder moes inkruip. Hier moes ons nou bly my

moeder so te se heeltemal sigbaar van die pad af, en ons albei nog so na-aan die herberg, dat ek alles kon hoor wat daar gebeur.

# Chapter 5

## The Last of the Blind Man

MY curiosity, in a sense, was stronger than my fear, for I could not remain where I was, but crept back

to the bank again, whence, sheltering my head behind a bush of broom, I might command the road before our door. I was scarcely in position ere my enemies began to arrive, seven

or eight of them, running hard, their feet beating out of time along the road and the man with the lantern some paces in front. Three men ran together, hand in hand; and I made out, even through the mist, that the

middle man of this trio was the blind beggar. The next moment his voice showed me that I was right.

"Down with the door!" he cried. "Aye, aye, sir!" answered two or three; and a rush was made upon the

Admiral Benbow, the lantern-bearer following; and then I could see them pause, and hear speeches passed in a lower key, as if they were surprised to find the door open. But the pause was brief, for the blind man again issued his commands. His voice sounded louder and higher, as if he were afire with eagerness and rage. "In, in, in!" he shouted, and cursed them for their delay.

Four or five of them obeyed at once, two remaining on the road with the formidable beggar. There was a pause, then a cry of surprise, and then a voice shouting from the house, "Bill's dead."

But the blind man swore at them again for their delay.

"Search him, some of you shirking lubbers, and the rest of you aloft and get the chest," he cried.

I could hear their feet rattling up our old stairs, so that the house must have shook with it. Promptly afterwards, fresh sounds of astonishment arose; the window of the captain's room was thrown open with a slam and a jingle of broken glass, and a man leaned out into the moonlight, head and shoulders, and addressed the blind beggar on the road below him.

"Pew," he cried, "they've been

before us. Someone's turned the chest out alow and aloft."

"Is it there?" roared Pew. "The money's there."

The blind man cursed the money. "Flint's fist, I mean," he cried. "We don't see it here nohow," returned the man.

"Here, you below there, is it on

Bill?" cried the blind man again.

At that another fellow, probably him who had remained below to search the captain's body, came to the door of the inn. "Bill's been overhauled a'ready," said he; "nothin' left."

"It's these people of the inn—it's that boy. I wish I had put his eyes out!"

cried the blind man, Pew. "There were no time ago—they had the door bolted when I tried it. Scatter, lads, and find 'em."

"Sure enough, they left their glim here," said the fellow from the window.

"Scatter and find 'em! Rout the house out!" reiterated Pew, striking with

his stick upon the road.

Then there followed a great to-do through all our old inn, heavy feet pounding to and fro, furniture thrown over, doors kicked in, until the very rocks re-echoed and the men came out again, one after another, on the road and declared that we were

nowhere to be found. And just the same whistle that had alarmed my mother and myself over the dead captain's money was once more clearly audible through the night, but this time twice repeated. I had thought it to be the blind man's trumpet, so to speak, summoning his crew to the assault, but I now found that it was a signal from the hillside towards the hamlet, and from its effect upon the buccaneers, a signal to warn them of approaching danger. "There's Dirk again," said one. "Twice! We'll have to budge, mates."

"Budge, you skulk!" cried Pew.

"Dirk was a fool and a coward from the first—you wouldn't mind him. They must be close by; they can't be far; you have your hands on it. Scatter and look for them, dogs! Oh, shiver my soul," he cried, "if I had eyes!"

This appeal seemed to produce some effect, for two of the fellows began

to look here and there among the lumber, but half-heartedly, I thought, and with half an eye to their own danger all the time, while the rest stood irresolute on the road.

"You have your hands on thousands, you fools, and you hang a leg! You'd be as rich as kings if you could find

it, and you know it's here, and you stand there skulking. There wasn't one of you dared face Bill, and I did it—a blind man! And I'm to lose my chance for you! I'm to be a poor, crawling beggar, sponging for rum,

when I might be rolling in a coach! If you had the pluck of a weevil in a biscuit you would catch them still." "Hang it, Pew, we've got the doubloons!" grumbled one.

“They might have hid the blessed thing,” said another. “Take the Georges, Pew, and don’t stand here squalling.”

Squalling was the word for it; Pew’s anger rose so high at these objections till at last, his passion completely taking the upper hand, he struck at them right and left in his blindness and his stick sounded heavily on more than one.

These, in their turn, cursed back at the blind miscreant, threatened him in horrid terms, and tried in vain to catch the stick and wrest it from his grasp.

This quarrel was the saving of us, for while it was still raging, another sound came from the top of the hill on the side of the hamlet—the tramp of horses galloping. Almost at the same time a pistol-shot, flash and report, came from the hedge side.

And that was plainly the last signal of danger, for the buccaneers turned at once and ran, separating in every direction, one seaward along the cove, one slant across the hill, and so on, so that in half a minute not a

sign of them remained but Pew. Him they had deserted, whether in sheer panic or out of revenge for his ill words and blows I know not; but there he remained behind, tapping up and down the road in a frenzy, and groping and calling for his

comrades. Finally he took a wrong turn and ran a few steps past me, towards the hamlet, crying, “Johnny, Black Dog, Dirk,” and other names,

“you won’t leave old Pew, mates— not old Pew!”

Just then the noise of horses topped the rise, and four or five riders came in sight in the moonlight and swept at full gallop down the slope.

At this Pew saw his error, turned with a scream, and ran straight for the ditch, into which he rolled. But he was on his feet again in a second and made another dash, now utterly bewildered, right under the nearest of the coming horses.

The rider tried to save him, but in vain. Down went Pew with a cry that rang high into the night; and the four hoofs trampled and spurned him and

passed by. He fell on his side, then gently collapsed upon his face and moved no more.

I leaped to my feet and hailed the riders. They were pulling up, at any rate, horrified at the accident; and I soon saw what they were. One, tailing out behind the rest, was a lad that had gone from the hamlet to Dr. Livesey’s; the rest were revenue officers, whom he had met by the way, and with whom he had had the intelligence to return at once. Some news of the lugger in Kitt’s Hole had found its way to Supervisor Dance and set him forth that night in our direction, and to that

circumstance

my mother and I owed our preservation from death.

Pew was dead, stone dead. As for my mother, when we had carried her up to the hamlet, a little cold water and salts and that soon brought her back again, and she was none the worse for her terror, though she still continued to deplore the balance of the money. In the meantime the supervisor rode on, as fast as he could, to Kitt's Hole; but his men had to dismount and grope down the dingle, leading, and sometimes supporting, their horses, and in continual fear of ambushes; so it was no great matter for surprise that

when they got down to the Hole the lugger was already under way, though still close in. He hailed her. A voice replied, telling him to keep out of the moonlight or he would get some lead in him, and at the same time a bullet whistled close by his arm. Soon after, the lugger doubled the point and disappeared. Mr.

Dance stood there, as he said, "like a fish out of water," and all he could

do was to dispatch a man to B— to warn the cutter. "And that," said he, "is just about as good as nothing. They've got off clean, and there's an end. Only," he added, "I'm glad I trod on Master Pew's corns," for by

this time he had heard my story.

I went back with him to the Admiral Benbow, and you cannot imagine a house in such a state of smash; the very clock had been thrown down by these fellows in their furious hunt after my mother and myself; and though nothing had actually been taken away except the captain's money-bag and a little silver from

the till, I could see at once that we were ruined. Mr. Dance could make nothing of the scene.

"They got the money, you say? Well, then, Hawkins, what in fortune were they after? More money, I suppose?" "No, sir; not money, I think," replied

I. "In fact, sir, I believe I have the thing in my breast pocket; and to tell you the truth, I should like to get it put in safety."

"To be sure, boy; quite right," said he. "I'll take it, if you like."

"I thought perhaps Dr. Livesey—" I began.

"Perfectly right," he interrupted very cheerily, "perfectly right—a gentleman and a magistrate. And, now I come to think of it, I might as well ride round there myself and report to him or squire. Master Pew's dead, when all's done; not that I regret it, but he's dead, you see, and people will make it out against an officer of his Majesty's revenue, if make it out they can. Now, I'll tell you, Hawkins, if you like, I'll take you along."

I thanked him heartily for the offer, and we walked back to the hamlet where the horses were. By the time I had told mother of my purpose they were all in the saddle.

“Dogger,” said Mr. Dance, “you have a good horse; take up this lad behind you.”

As soon as I was mounted, holding on to Dogger’s belt, the supervisor gave the word, and the party struck out at a bouncing trot on the road to Dr. Livesey’s house.

# Chapter 5

## Laaste sien van die Blinde Man

My nuuskierigheid was in n seker sin sterker as my vrees; want ek kon nie bly waar ek was nie, maar ek kruip weer terug teen die wal uit, en steek my kop agter n bossie weg, sodat ek net mooi op die pad kon sien wat voor ons deur verbygaan. Ek sit skaars of ons ver-volgers begin aan te kom. Ek het sewe of agt getel, en hulle hardloop so vinnig dat hulle voete klap op die harde grond, die man met die lantern n paar tree voor die ander uit. Drie mans hardloop hand aan hand; en selfs deur die mis kon ek sien dat die middelste een die blinde man was. Die volgende oomblik hoor ek sy stem.

Slaan die deur in! skreeu hy.

Daar val hy! antwoord twee of drie gelyk, en hulle storm die Admiral Benbow, met die lanterndraer agter hulle aan. En toe sien ek hulle staan stil, en praat suutjies onder mekaar, asof hulle verwonder was om die deur oop te vind. Maar nie te lank nie of die blinde man skree weer sy bevele uit.

In, in, in! brul hy, en hy vloek hulle omdat hulle so lank draai.

Vier of vyf storm nou gelyk in, en twee bly agter by die vreeslike blinde bedelaar. Weer was daar n oomblik stilte, toe roep iemand verwonder van die huis se kant af: Bill is dood!

Maar die blinde man vloek hulle weer uit. Soek sy sakke deur, julle bang landrotte, en loop twee van julle die trap op om sy kis te haal! skree hy.

Ek kon duidelik hoor hoedat hulle die ou trap rate-lend opstorm, sodat die huis seker daarvan geskud het. Kort daarna kom daar weer n geroep van verbasing; die venster van die kaptein se kamer word oopgesmyt, sodat n paar ruite op die grond stukkend val; n man steek sy kop daaruit, en praat met die blinde man wat nog altyd onder in die pad staan.

Pew, roep hy, hulle was ons voor. Die hele kis is deurgesnuffel.

Is dit daar? bulder Pew.

Die geld is daar.

Die blinde man verwens die geld.

Ek meen Flint se vuus.

Ons kan dit nrens kry nie, antwoord die man. Fier, julle daar onder, is dit aan Bil se lyk? vra die blinde man weer.

n Ander kerel, seker die een wat die ou kaptein se lyk ondersoek het, kom na die deur toe. Bill is al uit-geskud, se hy; daar het niks oorgebly nie.



Dis die mense van die herberg dis daardie ver-vloekste seun! Ek wens ek het sy oë uitgekrap, raas die blinde man, Pew. Hulle was netnou nog hier; die deur was gesluit toe ek dit wou oopmaak. Soek hulle, maats, soek hulle!

Ja dis waar, hulle kers staan nog hier en brand, roep die man deur die venster.

Soek hulle! Keer die huis onderstebo! skreeu Pew weer, en stamp met sy stok op die grond.

Toe was daar n geweldige gedoente in ons ou huis, swaar voetstappe dreun heen en weer, meubels word omgesmyt, deure word ingeskop, sodat die rotse daarvan weergalm, totdat die mans weer buitentoe kom en sê dat ons nêrens te vinde was nie. En toe klink daardie selfde gefluit weer, wat my moeder en my so laat skrik het toe ons by die oorlede ou kaptein se geld gesit het, maar nou klink dit tweemaal agtermekaar, en baie skerp.

Ek het eers gedink dat dit die blinde man se teken was om sy manskappe bymekaar te roep tot die aanval; maar nou kom ek agter dat dit van die heuwel se kant af kom wat nader aan die dorpie lê, en ek kon uit die houding van die seerowers sien dat dit n waarskuwing was.

Daar fluit Dirk weer, sê een. Tweemaal! Ons sal moet vlug, maats.

Vlug, jou bangbroek! skree Pew. Dirk was van die begin af n lafaard en n dwaas; julle hoef van hom geen notisie te neem nie. Daardie mense moet hier êrens in die nabyheid wees. Soek hulle soek orals, julle honde! Ag, troos my siel, as ek tog maar kon sien! Hierdie vermaning het tog n uitwerking gehad, want ek sien hoedat twee van die kêrels hier en daar begin te soek onder leë kiste en goed, maar halfhartig, en met een oog op die gevaar wat aankom. Al die ander staan besluiteloos in die pad en rondkyk.

Julle kan julle hande op duisende ponde lê, julle dwase, en julle staan en ronddraai! So ryk soos die koning sou julle wees as julle dit net in hande kon kry, en julle weet dis hier, en tog staan julle nog stil. Nie een van julle wou Bill opsoek nie, en ek het dit gedoen

n blinde man! En nou moet ek my kans verloor deur julle! Ek moet n arme bedelaar bly, wat ander mense

moet soebat vir n sopie, en ek kon in n koets ry! As julle die moed van n muggie gehad het, was hulle al lankal gevang.

Ag, hou jou mond, Pew, ons het tog die doebloene! brom een.

Miskien het hulle die ellendige ding weggesteek, sê n ander. Neem die Krone, Pew, en moenie daar staan en rusie maak nie.

Pew was nou so woedend dat hy regs en links begin te slaan met sy stok, en meer as een getref. Die begin op hulle beurt ook terug te vloek op die blinde misdadiger, bedreig hom op die vreeslikste manier, en probeer om die stok uit sy hand te ruk, maar verniet.

Hierdie twis was ons redding; want dit was nog aan die gang toe kom daar n ander geluid van die heuwel se kant af die geklop van perdepote. Byna op dieself de oomblik val daar n pistoolskot.

Dit was glo die laaste waarskuwing, want die seeskuimers sit dadelik op loop, elkeen in n ander rigting,

een see se kant toe, een skuins oor die heuwel, ensovoorts, sodat daar binnekort nie n teken van hulle oor-bly nie, behalwe Pew. Hulle laat hom in die steek, miskien van pure skrik, of miskien uit wraak vir al sy skelwoorde. Daar bly hy in elk geval agter, en tok-tok op en af in die pad soos n waansinnige, en al die tyd roep hy na sy kamerade. Op die ou ent hardloop hy die verkeerde kant uit, reguit by my verby na die dorp se kant toe.

Johnny, Black Dog, Dirk! roep hy, julle sal tog nie ou Pew in die steek laat nie, maats, nie arme ou Pew nie!

Die geluid van perdepote kom nader, en vier of vyf ruiters kom in die maanlig oor die rant, en jaag in voile galop na die huis se kant toe af.

Pew ontdek nou dat hy verkeerd gaan, en draai met n harde gil om, en hardloop reguit na die sloot toe, waar hy intol. Maar hy was weer gou op sy voete, en storm n ander rigting uit, nou glad van sy wysie af, sodat hy reg onder die voorste perd se pote te lande kom.

Die ruiter probeer om hom te red, maar tevergeefs. Pew val agteroor met n angsskreeu wat skel deur die nag geklink het. Hy val op sy linkersy, rol toe stadig oor op sy gesig, en le doodstil.

Ek spring op agter die bos uit, en roep na die perde-ruiters. Hulle het reeds die perde ingehou, want hulle het die vreeslike ongeluk gesien, dus kon ek oaderskei wie hulle was. Die heelagterste was die seun wat na Dr. Livesey toe gery het; die ander was belastingsbeamptes wat hy langs die pad ontmoet het. Hy was gelukkig verstandig genoeg om hulle dadelik met hom saam te bring. Opsigter Dance het son windjie gehoor waai van die skuit wat in Kitts Cove le, en het dadelik daarheen afgesit met n paar van die manskappe; hierdie verloop van sake het my lewe en my moeder sn gered.

Pew was dood, morsdood. Ons het my moeder na die dorpie toe gedra, en n bietjie kou water en vlugsout het haar gou weer Laat bykom. Sy het daar niks van oorgehou nie, maar begin sommer vjeer te kerm oor die geld wat sy te min geneem het. Ondertussen het die opsigter so hard as hy kon, aangery na Kitts Cove toe; maar sy manskappe moes afklim van die perde, en voetjie vir voetjie die diere deur die kloof lei, terwyl hulle gedurig in gevaar was om aangeval te word. Dit was dus geen wonder dat die skuit al n end die see in was toe hulle by die spelonk kom nie. Die opsigter skreeu vir hulle om stil

te hou. n Stem skreeu terug dat hy maar gerus uit die maanlig uit moes bly, of hy sou n klomp lood deur sy lyf kry, en met hierdie woorde, fluït n koeël teen sy arm aan verby. Kort daarop seil die skuit om die rotspunt, en verdwyn uit die gesig. Meneer Dance staan daar, soos hy later dit uitgedruk het, soos n vis op die droë grond, en al wat hy kon doen, was om n boodskap te stuur na B., om die kommandant van die wagskip te waarsku.

En dit beteken soveel as niks, sê he, hulle is skoon weg, en dit is die end van die saak. Maar ek is darem bly dat ek op Meneer Pew se liddorings getrap het.

Ek het met hom saam teruggegaan na die Admiral Benbow toe; en n mens kan jou nouliks voorstel hoe groot die verwoesting was wat ons daar aangetref het. Tot die huisklok het die ellendeling omgesmyt om na my moeder en my te soek. Daar was niks weggedra nie, behalwe die kaptein se sak geld, en n bietjie silwergeld uit die toonbank se laai. Ek kon dadelik sien dat ons bankrot was. Meneer Dance kon niks uit die affêre wys-raak nie.

Hulle het die geld gekry, sê jy? Nou ja, Hawkins, wat die ongeluk het hulle dan nog gesoek? Nog meer geld?

Nee, meneer; ek glo nie dit was geld nie, sê ek. Om die waarheid te sê, ek glo dit was die ding wat ek hier in my baadjiesak dra; en ek wil dit baie graag op n veilige plek bring.

Dis reg, my seun, sê hy. Ek sal dit vir jou bewaar as jy wil.

Ek het gedink om dit aan Dr. Livesey te gee, begin ek.

Heeltemal reg, val hy my goeðhartig in die rede. Dr. Livesey is n magistraat, en dus net die regte persoon. En, nou val dit my by, ek kan maar self daarlangs ry, en die hele voorval rapporteer aan hom of aan Meneer Trelawney. Meneer Pew is dood, weet jy; nie dat ek daaroor spyt het nie, maar hy is darem dood, en die mense vind so graag fout met n offisier van Sy Maje-steit. Ek sal jou sê, Hawkins, kom saam met my. Ek het hom hartelik bedank vir die aanbod, en ons loop toe terug na die dorp toe waar die perde staan. Ek het my moeder gaan vertel wat die plan was, en toe ek buite kom, was almal reeds in die saal.

Dogger, sê Meneer Dance, jou perd is goed; tel hierdie seun agter jou op.

Toe ek sit, met altwee hande vas in Dogger se lyfband, gee die opsigter die bevel, en die troep ry weg op n stywe draf na Dr. Livesey se huis toe.

# Chapter 6

## The Captain's Papers

WE rode hard all the way till we drew up before Dr. Livesey's door. The house was all dark to the front. Mr. Dance told me to jump down and knock, and Dogger gave me a stirrup to descend by. The door was opened almost at once by the maid. "Is Dr. Livesey in?" I asked.

No, she said, he had come home in the afternoon but had gone up to the hall to dine and pass the evening with the squire.

"So there we go, boys," said Mr. Dance.

This time, as the distance was short, I did not mount, but ran with Dogger's stirrup-leather to the lodge gates and up the long, leafless, moonlit avenue to where the white line of the hall buildings looked on either hand on great old gardens. Here Mr. Dance dismounted, and taking me along with him, was admitted at a word into the house. The servant led us down a matted passage and showed us at the end into a great library, all lined with bookcases and busts upon the top of them, where the squire and Dr. Livesey sat, pipe in hand, on either side of a bright fire.

I had never seen the squire so near at hand. He was a tall man, over six

feet high, and broad in proportion, and he had a bluff, rough-and-ready face, all roughened and reddened and lined in his long travels. His eyebrows were very black, and moved readily, and this gave him a look of some temper, not bad, you would say, but quick and high.

"Come in, Mr. Dance," says he, very stately and condescending.

"Good evening, Dance," says the doctor with a nod. "And good evening to you, friend Jim. What good wind brings you here?"

The supervisor stood up straight and

stiff and told his story like a lesson; and you should have seen how the two gentlemen leaned forward and looked at each other, and forgot to smoke in their surprise and interest. When they heard how my mother went back to the inn, Dr. Livesey fairly slapped his thigh, and the squire cried "Bravo!" and broke his long pipe against the grate. Long before it was done, Mr. Trelawney (that, you will remember, was the squire's name) had got up from his seat and was striding about the room, and the doctor, as if to hear the better, had taken off his powdered wig and sat there looking

very strange indeed with his own close-cropped black poll.

At last Mr. Dance finished the story. "Mr. Dance," said the squire, "you are a very noble fellow. And as for riding down that black,

atrocious miscreant, I regard it as an act of virtue, sir, like stamping on a cockroach. This lad Hawkins is a trump, I perceive. Hawkins, will you ring that bell? Mr. Dance must have some ale."

"And so, Jim," said the doctor, "you have the thing that they were after, have you?"

"Here it is, sir," said I, and gave him the oilskin packet.

The doctor looked it all over, as if his fingers were itching to open it; but instead of doing that, he put it quietly in the pocket of his coat.

"Squire," said he, "when Dance has had his ale he must, of course, be off on his Majesty's service; but I mean to keep Jim Hawkins here to sleep at my house, and with your permission, I propose we should have up the

cold pie and let him sup."

"As you will, Livesey," said the squire; "Hawkins has earned better than cold pie."

So a big pigeon pie was brought in and put on a sidetable, and I made a hearty supper, for I was as hungry as

a hawk, while Mr. Dance was further complimented and at last dismissed.

"And now, squire," said the doctor. "And now, Livesey," said the squire in the same breath.

"One at a time, one at a time," laughed Dr. Livesey. "You have heard of this Flint, I suppose?" "Heard of him!" cried the squire. "Heard of him, you say! He was the bloodthirstiest buccaneer that sailed. Blackbeard was a child to Flint. The Spaniards were so prodigiously afraid of him that, I tell you, sir, I was sometimes proud he was an Englishman. I've seen his top-sails

with these eyes, off Trinidad, and the cowardly son of a rum-puncheon that I sailed with put back—put back, sir, into Port of Spain."

"Well, I've heard of him myself, in England," said the doctor. "But the point is, had he money?"

"Money!" cried the squire. "Have you heard the story? What were these villains after but money? What do they care for but money? For what would they risk their rascal carcasses but money?"

"That we shall soon know," replied the doctor. "But you are so confoundedly hot-headed and exclamatory that I cannot get a word in. What I want to know is this: Supposing that I have here in my pocket some clue to where Flint buried his treasure, will that treasure amount to much?"

"Amount, sir!" cried the squire. "It will amount to this: If we have the clue you talk about, I fit out a ship in Bristol dock, and take you and Hawkins here along, and I'll have that treasure if I search a year."

"Very well," said the doctor. "Now, then, if Jim is agreeable, we'll

open

the packet"; and he laid it before him on the table.

The bundle was sewn together, and the doctor had to get out his instrument case and cut the stitches with his medical scissors. It contained two things—a book and a sealed paper.

"First of all we'll try the book," observed the doctor.

The squire and I were both peering over his shoulder as he opened it, for Dr. Livesey had kindly motioned me to come round from the sidetable, where I had been eating, to enjoy the sport of the search. On the first page there were only some scraps of writing, such as a man with a pen in his hand might make for idleness or practice. One was the same as the tattoo mark, "Billy

Bones his fancy"; then there was "Mr. W. Bones, mate," "No more rum," "Off Palm Key he got itt," and some other snatches, mostly single words and unintelligible. I could not help wondering who it was that had "got itt," and what "itt" was that he got. A knife in his back as like as

not.

"Not much instruction there," said

Dr. Livesey as he passed on.

The next ten or twelve pages were filled with a curious series of entries. There was a date at one end of the line and at the other a sum of money, as in common account-books, but instead of explanatory writing, only a varying number of crosses between the two. On the 12th of June, 1745, for instance, a sum of seventy pounds had plainly become due to someone, and there was nothing but six crosses to explain the cause. In a few cases, to be sure, the name of a place would be added, as "Offe Caraccas," or a mere entry of latitude and longitude, as "62o 17' 20", 19o 2' 40".

The record lasted over nearly twenty years, the amount of the separate entries growing larger as time went on, and at the end a grand total had been made out after five or six

wrong additions, and these words

appended, "Bones, his pile."

"I can't make head or tail of this," said Dr. Livesey.

"The thing is as clear as noonday," cried the squire. "This is the black-hearted hound's account-book. These crosses stand for the names of ships or towns that they sank or plundered. The sums are the scoundrel's share, and where he feared an ambiguity, you see he added something clearer.

'Offe Caraccas,' now; you see, here was some unhappy vessel boarded off that coast. God help the poor souls that manned her—coral long ago."

"Right!" said the doctor. "See what it

is to be a traveller. Right! And the amounts increase, you see, as he rose in rank."

There was little else in the volume but a few bearings of places noted in the blank leaves towards the end and a table for reducing French, English, and Spanish moneys to a common value.

"Thrifty man!" cried the doctor. "He wasn't the one to be cheated."

"And now," said the squire, "for the other."

The paper had been sealed in several places with a thimble by way of seal; the very thimble, perhaps, that I had found in the captain's pocket. The doctor opened the seals with great care, and there fell out the map of an island, with latitude and longitude, soundings, names of hills and bays and inlets, and every particular that would be needed to bring a ship to a safe anchorage upon its shores. It was about nine miles long and five across, shaped, you might say, like a fat dragon standing up, and had two fine land-locked harbours, and a hill in the centre part marked "The Spy-glass." There were several additions of a later date, but above all, three crosses of red ink—two on the north part of the island, one in the southwest—and beside this last, in

the same red ink, and in a small, neat hand, very different from the captain's tottery characters, these words: "Bulk of treasure here." Over on the back the same hand had written this further information:

Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to the N. of N.N.E. Skeleton Island E.S.E. and by E. Ten feet.

The bar silver is in the north cache; you can find it by the trend of the east hummock, ten fathoms south of the black crag with the face on it.

The arms are easy found, in the sand-hill, N. point of north inlet

cape, bearing E. and a quarter N. J.F.

That was all; but brief as it was, and to me incomprehensible, it filled the squire and Dr. Livesey with delight. "Livesey," said the squire, "you will give up this wretched practice at once. Tomorrow I start for Bristol.

In three weeks' time—three weeks!—two weeks—ten days—we'll have the best ship, sir, and the choicest crew in England. Hawkins shall come as cabin-boy. You'll make a famous cabin-boy, Hawkins. You, Livesey, are ship's doctor; I am admiral.

We'll take Redruth, Joyce, and

Hunter. We'll have favourable

winds, a quick passage, and not the least difficulty in finding the spot, and money to eat, to roll in, to play duck and drake with ever after."

"Trelawney," said the doctor, "I'll go with you; and I'll go bail for it, so will Jim, and be a credit to the undertaking. There's only one man I'm afraid of."

“And who’s that?” cried the squire. “Name the dog, sir!”

“You,” replied the doctor; “for you cannot hold your tongue. We are not the only men who know of this paper. These fellows who attacked the inn tonight— bold, desperate blades, for sure—and the rest who stayed aboard that lugger, and more, I dare say, not far off, are, one and all, through thick and thin, bound that they’ll get that money. We must none of us go alone till we get to sea. Jim and I shall stick together in the meanwhile; you’ll take Joyce and Hunter when you ride to Bristol, and from first to last, not one of us must breathe a word of what we’ve found.”

“Livesey,” returned the squire, “you are always in the right of it. I’ll be as silent as the grave.”



# Chapter 6

## Die Kaptein se Papiere

Ons het die hele ent pad vinnig gery tot ons voor Dr. Livesey se huis stielgehou het. Dit was alles donker daar.

Meneer Dance se ek moet afklim en klop, en Dogger het sy stiebeuel vir my gehou om langs af te klim. Die bediende maak die deur oop.

Is Dr. Livesey tuis? het ek gevra.

Nee, het sy geantwoord, hy het in die agtermiddag tuis gekom, maar is weer uit na die landheer om die aand daar deur te bring.

Dan gaan ons ook maar daarheen, kereels, het Meneer Dance gesê.

Die slag, omdat dit son klein entjie was, het ek maar langs Dogger se perd gehardloop, met my hand aan sy stiegriem. So het ons deur die hekke van die kasteel, en deur die lang laning blaarlose bome gegaan, tot waar die groot wit gebou in n uitgestrekte park gestaan het. Hier klim Meneer Dance af en neem my met hom saam. Ons word dadelik binnegelaat.

Ons het die bediende met n lang gang af gevolg tot in die groot rustige leeskamer waarvan die mure met rakke vol boeke en borsbeelde bedek was. Voor ons het Dr. Livesey en de heer Trelawney gesit voor n gesellige vuur, elkeen met n pyp in die mond.

Dit was die eerste keer dat ek die landheer van so naby sien. Hy was n lang man, oor die ses voet, breed gebou en met n goeiehartige gesig, rooi en grof en vol rimpels van al sy rondreis. Sy wenkbroue was baie donker en het gedurig beweeg, sodat dit vir my gelyk het asof hy baie kortgebonde kon wees.

Kom in, Mnr. Dance, se hy baie deftig en n bietjie uit die hoogte.

Naand, Dance, se die dokter met n hoofknik. En goeienaand, vriend Jim. Waiter gunstige wind het jou hiernatoe gewaai?

Die opsigter staan penregop en vertel sy storie soos n les wat hy opse. So het die verhaal hulle geboei, dat dit interessant was om te sien hoedat die twee mans vooroor leun, mekaar uit verbasing aanstaar en skoon vergeet het dat hulle besig was om pyp te rook.

Bravo! het die landheer uitgeroep en sy pyp teen die kaggel stukkend geslaan, terwyl Dr. Livesey van opgewondenheid op sy knieë geslaan het, toe hulle hoor dat my moeder na die herberg teruggegaan het. Lank voordat Dance klaar was het Meneer Trelawney opgestaan en in die kamer rondgestap, en Dr. Livesey het sy gepoeierde pruik afgeruk sodat hy beter kon hoor. Hy het te koddig gelyk soos hy daar met sy swart kortgeknippte hare gesit het.

Eindelik was Meneer Dance se storie klaar.

Meneer Dance, sê die landheer, jy is n flukse kereel. En wat die dood van daardie ellendige, vuil misdadiger betref, dat jy hom doodgetrap het, beskou ek as n weldaad wat jy aan die mensdom bewys het; hy was

niks beter as n kakkerlak nie. Ek kan sommer sien dat hierdie klein Hawkins n gawe seun is. Hawkins, lui bietjie daardie klokkie. Meneer Dance moet iets kry om te drink.

En so, Jim, dan het jy al die tyd die ding waama hulle gesoek het by jou gehad?

Hier is dit, dokter, en ek gee vir hom die pakkie in die seildoek.

Die dokter bekyk dit van alkante, asof sy vingers jeuk om dit oop te maak; maar steek dit eindelijk bedaard in sy sak.

Squire, sê hy. as Dance sy sopje in het, moet hy natuurlik weer op diens gaan, maar Jim Hawkins gaan vannag by my huis slaap, en ek sou graag sien dat u die koue pastei laat haal en vir hom gee om te eet.

n Groot duiwe-pastei word binnegebring en vir my op n sytafeltjie gesit, en glo my ek het smaaklik geëet, want ek was so honger soos n wolf. Nadat Meneer Dance nog n keer geprys is, is hy weggestuur.

En nou, Squire, het die dokter gesê.

En nou, Livesey, sê die landheer byna gelyktydig. Elkeen op sy beurt, lag die dokter. U het natuurlik al van daar die Flint gehoor, nie waar nie?

Van hom gehoor! sê die landheer. Hy was die bloeddorstigste rower wat ooit op die see gevaar het. Bloubaard was n babettjie by Flint gereken. Die Span-jaarde was so vreeslik bang vir hom, dat ek werklik soms trots daarop was dat hy n Engelsman was. Ek het sy marsseile met my eie oë gesien. Dit was by Trinidad en die lafhartige suiplap wat kaptein was van ons skip het omgedraai na die hawe toe, omgedraai, sê ek vir jou!

Ek het ook van hom hoor praat in Engeland, sê die dokter. Maar die vraag is, het hy geld gehad?

Geld! skree Meneer Trelawney. Het jy dan nie die verhaal vanaand gehoor nie? Waaragter was daardie vabonde, as dit nie geld was nie? Waarvoor sou hulle anders hulle ellendige karkasse waag as dit nie vir geld was nie?

Dit sal ons gou genoeg weet, antwoord die dokter. Maar jy is so vervlaks opvlieënd en spraaksaam dat ek nie n woord kan in kry nie. Wat ek wil weet, is dit: Sê nou dat ek hier in my sak die sleutel het van die plek waar Flint sy skatte begrawe het, sal dit van groot waarde vir ons wees?

Groot? vervolg die Squire. Dit sal van soveel waarde wees, dat, as jy werklik die sleutel het waarvan jy praat, ek sal onderneem om n skip uit te rus in Bristol, en jy en ek en Hawkins sal daar die skat gaan

soek, en ons sal dit kry ook, al vat dit ons n hele jaar.

Nou goed, sê die dokter, as Jim saamstem, sal ons die pakkie oopmaak, en hy plaas dit voor hom op die tafel neer.

Die pak was toegenaai en die dokter moes uit sy instrumentedoois n sker haal om die steke mee los te knip. Daar was twee voorwerpe in, n boek en n verseelde papier.

Kom ons kyk eers na die boek, sê die dokter.

Die Squire en ek loer altwee oor sy skouer toe hy dit oopmaak, want Dr. Livesey was so vriendelik gewees om vir my te wink om ook te kom help met die soekery.

Op die eerste bladsy was net hier en daar n paar woorde gekrap, soos n mens met n pen in die hand partymaal maak, uit skone ledigheid, of om te leer skrywe. Op een plek was dieselfde woorde as op die ou kaptein se arm: Billy Bones se Begeerte. Dan was daar Meneer W. Bones, Stuurman, en Rum is op. By Palm Key het hy dit gekry, en dan nog n paar enkel onverstaanbare woorde. Ek kon nie help om te wonder wie dit was wat dit gekry het nie, en wat die dit nou

eintlik was. Heel waarskynlik n steek met n mes.

Hier is nie veel te sien nie, sê die dokter, terwyl hy omblaai.

Die volgende tien of twaalf bladsye was volgeskryf met snaakse aantekeninge. Daar was n datum aan die een kant van die bladsy, en aan die ander kant n som geld, net soos in n gewone boekhouboek; maar in plaas van woorde daar tussenin, was daar net n ry kruisies. Op ii Junie, 1745, byvoorbeeld, was iemand gedebiteer met die som van sewentig pond, maar daar was niks as n ry kruisies nie om te sê waarvoor dit was. In n paar gevalle was die naam van n plek bygevoeg, soos Naby Caraccas, of net die lengte en breedte, soos 62°. 17' 20", 190 2' 40".

Die aantekenings het oor n tydperk van sowat twintig jaar geloop, en die bedrae het altyd groter geword. Aan die end was die totaal ingevul, nadat dit vyf of ses keer verkeerd opgetel en toe weer deurgekrap was. Na die bedrag staan die woorde Bones se besitting.

Ek kan hiervan nie kop of stert uitmaak nie, het Dr. Livesey gesê.

Die ding is so duidelik soos die daglig, het die landheer gesê. Dit is die rekeningboek van die ou skurk. Die kruisies staan vir die name van skepe en dorpe wat hulle laat sink of geplunder het. Die bedrae is natuurlik sy aandeel van die buit, en waar hy bang was vir n vergissing, het hy iets meer bygevoeg. Naby Caraccas, byvoorbeeld. Hier het hulle natuurlik n arme ongelukkige skip geplunder. Mag God die arme siele genadig wees wat daarin was, hulle het lankal kos vir die haaie geword.

Jim, sê die dokter, kyk tog hoe slim maak dit n mens om rond te reis! En kyk, die bedrae word groter en groter al na gelang hy hoër

opgeklim het in rang. Yerder was daar so te sê niks anders in die boek nie,

net n paar aantekenings omtrent die Jigging van sekere plekke op die skoon bladsye agterin, en n tafel om Franse en Spaanse geld na Engelse geld te herlei.

Die jakkals! Hy het horn nie laat kul nie, het die dokter gesê.

En nou, sê Meneer Trelawney, die ander ding.

Die dokument was op n paar plekke verseël met n vingerhoed; miskien dieselfde vingerhoed wat ek in die kaptein se sak gekry het. Die dokter het die seëls baie versigtig gebreek, en daar het die kaart van n eiland uitgeval, met lengte-en breedtegrade, name van heuwels, en baaie en inhamme, en alle besonderhede wat nodig sou weer om n skip veilig daar te laat anker. Dit was omtrent nege myl lank en vyf myl breed, dit het die fatsoen van n vet draak wat regop sit gehad, en daar was twee mooi, veilige hawes, en reg in die middel was n heuwel gemerk Die Verkyker. Daar was verskeie aantekenings van n later datum; maar wat veral ons aandag getrek het, was die drie kruisies in rooi ink,

twee aan die noordekant van die eiland, een in die Suidweste, en langs hierdie een, ook met rooi ink, en in n fyn, nette handskrif geskrywe, heeltemal anders as die kaptein se gekrap, hierdie woorde: Grootste deel van die skat lê hier.

Agterop het dieselfde handskrif verdere inligting gegee:

Groot boom, Verkyker-nek, wys N. van N. N. O.

Geraamte-eiland O. S. O. en aan O.

Tien voet.

Die stawe silwer lê in die Noordelike wegsteekplek. n Mens kan dit kry by die skuinste van die oostelike bultjie, tien vadems suid van die swart krans, met die opening daarheen.

Die wapens sal gemaklik gekry word in die sandheuwel aan die noordekant van die Noordelike Inham  
die rigting O en n vierde graad N.

Dit was al; maar so kort as dit was, en vir my totaal onverstaanbaar, het dit vir Dr. Livesey en die Squire met die grootste blydskap vervul.

Livesey, sê meneer Trelawney, jy moet dadelik daardie armsalige praktyk van jou laat vaar. Net more gaan ek na Bristol toe. Binne drie weke nee, twee weke tien dae, sal ons die beste skip in Engeland he en die beste bemanning. Hawkins, jy is uitgeknip vir kajuitsjonge. Jy, Livesey, is skeepsdokter, ek is admiraal. Ons sal Redruth, Joyce en Hunter saamneem. Die wind sal gunstig wees, die reis voorspoedig, en ons sal nie die minste moeite hê om die plek te kry nie, en dan geld genoeg he om te eet, geld om in te rol, om mee albaster te spel vir die res van ons lewe.

Trelawney, sê die dokter, ek gaan saam; en, ek wed, Jim gaan ook. Hy sal n aanwins wees vir die onderneming. Daar is net een man vir wie ek n bietjie bang is.

En wie is dit? skree die squire. Noem die hond se naam!

Jy, antwoord die dokter, want jy kan jou mond nie hou nie. Ons is nie die enigste mense wat weet van hierdie papier nie. Daardie kerels wat vanaand die herberg aangeval het, roekelose, gevaarlike skepsels, en die ander wat aan boo-rd van die boot gebly het, en miskien nog ander nie ver hiervandaan af nie, hulle is almal vas beslote om daardie geld in die hande te kry, kom wat wil. Geeneen van ons drie moet alleen rondloop tot ons skip vertrek nie. Jim en ek sal bymekaar bly; jy neem vir Joyce en Hunter saam as jy na Bristol toe ry, en, wat ook al gebeur, gemeen van ons moet n woord uitlaat oor wat ons gekry het nie.

Livesey, sê die squire, jy is altyd reg. Ek sal swyg soos n graf.

# PART TWO The Sea-cook

## Chapter 7

### I Go to Bristol

IT was longer than the squire imagined ere we were ready for the sea, and none of our first plans—not even Dr. Livesey’s, of keeping me beside him—could be carried out as we intended. The doctor had to go to London for a physician to take

charge of his practice; the squire was hard at work at Bristol; and I lived on at the hall under the charge of old Redruth, the gamekeeper, almost a prisoner, but full of sea-dreams and the most charming anticipations of strange islands and

adventures. I brooded by the hour together over the map, all the details of which I well remembered. Sitting by the fire in the housekeeper’s

room, I approached that island in my fancy from every possible direction;

I explored every acre of its surface; I climbed a thousand times to that tall hill they call the Spy-glass, and from the top enjoyed the most wonderful and changing prospects. Sometimes the isle was thick with savages, with whom we fought, sometimes full of dangerous animals that hunted us, but in all my fancies nothing occurred to me so strange and tragic as our actual adventures.

So the weeks passed on, till one fine day there came a letter addressed to Dr. Livesey, with this addition, “To be opened, in the case of his absence, by Tom Redruth or young Hawkins.” Obeying this order, we found, or rather I found—for the gamekeeper was a poor hand at reading anything but print—the following important news:

Old Anchor Inn, Bristol, March 1,  
17—

Dear Livesey—As I do not know whether you are at the hall or still in London, I send this in double to both places. The ship is bought and fitted. She lies at anchor, ready for sea.

You never imagined a sweeter schooner—a child might sail her—two hundred tons; name, HISPANIOLA. I got her through my old friend, Blandly, who has proved himself throughout the most surprising trump. The admirable fellow literally slaved in my interest, and so, I may say, did everyone in Bristol, as soon as they got

wind of the port we sailed for— treasure, I mean.

“Redruth,” said I, interrupting the letter, “Dr. Livesey will not like that. The squire has been talking, after all.”

“Well, who’s a better right?”

growled the gamekeeper. “A pretty rum go if squire ain’t to talk for Dr. Livesey, I should think.”

At that I gave up all attempts at commentary and read straight on: Blandly himself found the HISPANIOLA, and by the most admirable management got her for the merest trifle. There is a class of men in Bristol monstrously prejudiced against Blandly. They go the length of declaring that this honest creature would do anything for money, that the HISPANIOLA belonged to him, and that he sold it me absurdly high—the most

transparent calumnies. None of them

dare, however, to deny the merits of the ship. So far there was not a hitch. The workpeople, to be sure—riggers and what not—were most annoyingly slow; but time cured that. It was the crew that troubled me. I wished a round score of men—in case of natives, buccaneers, or the odious French—and I had the worry of the deuce itself to find so much as half a dozen, till the most remarkable

stroke of fortune brought me the very man that I required. I was standing

on the dock, when, by the merest accident, I fell in talk with him. I found he was an old sailor, kept a public-house, knew all the seafaring men in Bristol, had lost his health ashore, and wanted a good berth as cook to get to sea again. He had hobbled down there that morning, he said, to get a smell of the salt. I was monstrously touched—so would you have been—and, out of pure pity, I engaged him on the spot to be ship’s cook. Long John Silver, he is called, and has lost a leg; but that I regarded as a recommendation, since he lost it in his country’s service, under the immortal Hawke. He has no pension, Livesey. Imagine the abominable age we live in! Well, sir, I thought I had only found a cook, but it was a crew

I had discovered. Between Silver

and myself we got together in a few days a company of the toughest old salts imaginable—not pretty to look at, but fellows, by their faces, of the most indomitable spirit. I declare we could fight a frigate. Long John even got rid of two out of the six or seven

I had already engaged. He showed me in a moment that they were just the sort of fresh-water swabs we had to fear in an adventure of importance. I am in the most magnificent health and spirits, eating like a bull, sleeping like a tree, yet I shall not enjoy a moment till I hear my old tarpaulins tramping round the capstan. Seaward, ho!

Hang the treasure! It's the glory of the sea that has turned my head. So now, Livesey, come post; do not lose an hour, if you respect me. Let young Hawkins go at once to see his mother, with Redruth for a guard; and then both come full speed to Bristol. John Trelawney

Postscript—I did not tell you that Blandly, who, by the way, is to send a consort after us if we don't turn up by the end of August, had found an admirable fellow for sailing master-

-a stiff man, which I regret, but in all other respects a treasure. Long John Silver unearthed a very competent man for a mate, a man named Arrow.

I have a boatswain who pipes, Livesey; so things shall go man-o'-war fashion on board the good ship HISPANIOLA. I forgot to tell you that Silver is a man of substance; I know of my own knowledge that he has a banker's account, which has never been overdrawn. He leaves his wife to manage the inn; and as she is a woman of colour, a pair of old bachelors like you and I may be excused for guessing that it is the wife, quite as much as the health, that sends him back to roving. J. T. P.P.S.—Hawkins may stay one night with his mother. J. T.

You can fancy the excitement into

which that letter put me. I was half beside myself with glee; and if ever I despised a man, it was old Tom Redruth, who could do nothing but grumble and lament. Any of the under-gamekeepers would gladly have changed places with him; but such was not the squire's pleasure, and the squire's pleasure was like

law among them all. Nobody but old Redruth would have dared so much as even to grumble.

The next morning he and I set out on foot for the Admiral Benbow, and there I found my mother in good health and spirits. The captain, who had so long been a cause of so much

discomfort, was gone where the wicked cease from troubling. The squire had had everything repaired, and the public rooms and the sign repainted, and had added some furniture—above all a beautiful armchair for mother in the bar. He had found her a boy as an apprentice also so that she should not want help while I was gone.

It was on seeing that boy that I understood, for the first time, my situation. I had thought up to that moment of the adventures before me, not at all of the home that I was leaving; and now, at sight of this clumsy stranger, who was to stay

here in my place beside my mother, I had my first attack of tears. I am afraid I led that boy a dog's life, for as he was new to the work, I had a hundred opportunities of setting him right and putting him down, and I

was not slow to profit by them.



The night passed, and the next day, after dinner, Redruth and I were afoot again and on the road. I said good-bye to Mother and the cove where I had lived since I was born, and the dear old Admiral Benbow — since he was repainted, no longer quite so dear. One of my last thoughts was of the captain, who had so often strode along the beach with

his cocked hat, his sabre-cut cheek, and his old brass telescope. Next moment we had turned the corner and my home was out of sight.

The mail picked us up about dusk at the Royal George on the heath. I was wedged in between Redruth and a stout old gentleman, and in spite of the swift motion and the cold night air, I must have dozed a great deal from the very first, and then slept

like a log up hill and down dale through stage after stage, for when I was awakened at last it was by a punch in the ribs, and I opened my eyes to find that we were standing still before a large building in a city

street and that the day had already broken a long time.

“Where are we?” I asked. “Bristol,” said Tom. “Get down.” Mr. Trelawney had taken up his residence at an inn far down the docks to superintend the work upon the schooner. Thither we had now to walk, and our way, to my great delight, lay along the quays and

beside the great multitude of ships of all sizes and rigs and nations. In one, sailors were singing at their work, in another there were men aloft, high over my head, hanging to threads that seemed no thicker than a spider’s. Though I had lived by the shore all

my life, I seemed never to have been near the sea till then. The smell of

tar and salt was something new. I saw the most wonderful figureheads, that had all been far over the ocean. I saw, besides, many old sailors, with rings in their ears, and whiskers curled in ringlets, and tarry pigtails, and their swaggering, clumsy sea-walk; and if I had seen as many kings or archbishops I could not have been more delighted.

And I was going to sea myself, to sea in a schooner, with a piping boatswain and pigtailed singing seamen, to sea, bound for an unknown island, and to seek for buried treasure!

While I was still in this delightful dream, we came suddenly in front of a large inn and met Squire Trelawney, all dressed out like a sea-officer, in stout blue cloth, coming out of the door with a smile on his face and a capital imitation of a sailor’s walk.

“Here you are,” he cried, “and the doctor came last night from London. Bravo! The ship’s company complete!”

“Oh, sir,” cried I, “when do we sail?”

“Sail!” says he. “We sail tomorrow!”

DEEL II: DIE SKEEPSKOK

# Chapter 7

## Ek gaan na Bristol toe

Dit het langer geneem as wat die Squire gemeen het voor ons gereed was om op see te gaan, en nie een van ons eerste voornemens, nie eers Dr. Livesey se plan om my by hom te hou, kon uitgevoer word nie. Die dokter moes na Londen gaan om iemand te kry wat sy praktyk vir hom kon waarneem; die Squire was hard besig in Bristol, en ek het agtergebly in die kasteel onder sorg van ou Redruth, die jagopsiener. Ek was so te sê n prisonier, maar my kop was vol drome oor die see en vreemde eilande en avonture. Ek het ure lank oor die landkaart gesit en peins, want ek het die ding omtrent uit my hoof geken.

As ek so langs die vuur in die huishoudster se kamer gesit het, het ek so in my verbeelding om daardie eiland geseil; ek het elke duim grond ondersoek, en seker n duisend keer daardie kop wat hul die Verkyker noem bestyg en die wonderskoonste natuur-tonele opgemerk dit was ook elke keer anders.

Party keer was die eiland vol mensvreter, waarmee ons geveg het; dan weer vol gevaarlike wilde diere wat ons gejaag het; maar in al my drome het ek nooit iets so wonderlik en so tragies deurgemaak as wat later werklik gebeur het nie.

So het die weke omgegaan, totdat daar op n goeie dag n brief geadresseer aan Dr. Livesey gekom het, met hierdie woorde daarby: Ingeval van afwesigheid, moet dit oopgemaak word deur Hawkins of Tom Redruth.

Toe ons dit oopmaak het ons of liever ek, want Redruth kon nie goed lees nie, die volgende belangrike nuus gelees:

Herberg, Die Ou Anker Bristol, 1 Maart, 17 ..

Waarde Livesey,

Omdat ek nie weet of jy nog tuis is, of dalk na Londen toe weg is nie, stuur ek hierdie brief in dupli-kaat na albei plekke toe.

Die skip is gekoop en uitgerus. Dit lê voor anker, klaar om te seil. Jy kan jou nie n mooier skoener voorstel nie, n kind kan haar bestuur twee-honderd ton; naam Hispaniola.

Ek het haar deur my ou vriend, Blandly, in die hande gekry. Die kereel het hom baie gaaf gedra; hy het hom letterlik afgesloof vir my. Maar ek moet sê dat byna iedereen in Bristol dit gedoen het, sodra hulle agter gekom het waarheen ons seil, namelijk om n verborge skat.... ek bedoel....

Redruth, het ek gesê, Dr. Levesey sal hieroor ontevrede wees. Die Squire het dan tog darem nie stilgebly nie.

Wel, en waarom sou hy stilbly? brom ou Tom. Dit sou n mooi grap wees as die Squire moes stilbly net omdat Dr. Livesey so sê.

Ek sien toe dat dit maar beste was om geen aanmerkings te maak nie, en ek lees die brief toe dwarsdeur:

Blandly het self die Hispaniola uitgesoek, en dit baie goedkoop gekry ook. Daar is n sekere klas mense in Bristol wat nie n goeie woord vir Blandly het nie.

Hulle gaan sover om te sê dat hy enige ding sal doen virgeld; dat die Hispaniola aan hom behoort het; en

dat hy dit veels te duur aan my verkoop het. Ek glo dit is pure kwaadstokery, want niemand van hulle durf ontken dat dit n eersteklas skip is nie.

Totnogtoe het alles baie vlot gegaan. Die werks-manne was hopeloos te stadig na my sin, maar tyd het dit ook reggemaak. Waar ek my die meeste oor bekommer het, was die bemanning. Ek wou minstens twintig hê, ingeval ons kleurlinge teëkom, of seerowers, of die verfoeilike Franse, en ek kon vir geen geld of goeie woorde meer as n halfdosyn bymekaar kry nie, totdat die geluk my in aanraking met die regte man gebring het.

Dit was bloot per toeval dat ek hom op die dokke raakgeloop en kennis gemaak het. Hy is n gewese matroos, wat nou n losieshuis hou, hy ken al die seelui in Bristol, maar hy is moeg van die land, en wil graag n betrekking hê as skeepskok, net sodat hy weer op die see kan kom. Hy het die oggend na die hawe toe afgesukkel, sê hy, net om n mondjievol seelug in te asem.

Ek het vir hom baie jammer gevoel, jy sou ook maar so gevoel het, Livesey, en uit pure jammerte, het ek hom dadelik gehuur vir skeepskok. Long John Silver is sy naam, en hy het net een been, maar dit is n aanbeveling, want hy het dit in die diens van sy land verloor, onder die onsterflike Hawke. En hy trek nie eers pensioen nie, Livesey. Ellendige tyd waar ons in lewe!

Wel, ek het gedink ek het net n kok gekry, maar dit was n hele bemanning. Silver en ek het binne n paar dae die taaiste klomp seerotte bymekaar gemaak wat jy jou kan voorstel. Hulle is nie mooi om na te kyk nie, maar ek is nie bang om n hele frigat aan te val as ek hulle het nie.

Long John het selfs twee van die ses wat ek aan-geneem het, weer afgedank. Hy het my gou laat insien dat hulle net die regte soort landrotte was wat ons in die steek sou laat as ons in gevaar kom.

Ek is gesond en opgeruimd, eet en slaap goed, en tog sal ek nie gelukkig wees voor ek my ou pikbroeke hoor trap rondom die spil nie. See toe! Die skat kan begrawe bly vir my part! Dit is die glorie van die see wat my betower het. Dus, Livesey, kom dadelik, moe-nie n uur uitstel as jy my wil plesier nie.

Laat Hawkins dadelik gaan afskeid neem van sy moeder, met Redruth om hom te beskerm; en laat albei dan sou gou as moontlik na Bristol kom.

JOHN TRELAWNEY.

P.S. Ek het vergeet om jou te vertel dat Blandly,

wat ook n skip sal stuur om ons te soek ingeval ons nog nie terug is teen die einde van Augustus nie

vir my n eersteklas kaptein gekry het, n bietjie stuurs, wat my nie aanstaan nie, maar tog in alle opsigte n juweel. Long John Silver het n baie bekwame stuurman gekry, sy naam is Arrow. Die bootsman kan op die fluit blaas, Livesey; dus sal alles op die Hispaniola toegaan soos op n oorlogskip.

Nog iets. Silver is n bemiddelde man; ek weet vir seker dat hy krediet het by een van die beste banke. Sy vrou bly agter om sy sake waar te neem. Sy is n gekleurde vrou, en n mens kan jou en my, wat ou-jongkerels is, dit nie kwalik neem nie as ons glo dat dit die vrou is, meer as sy slegte gesondheid, wat hom weer terugjaag see toe.

J.T.

P. P. S. Hawkins kan een nag by sy moeder oorbly.

J.T.

n Mens kan jou nooit verbeel hoe bly daardie brief my gemaak het nie. Ek was in die wolke, en as ek ooit n man verag het, dan was dit ou Tom Redruth, wat niks doen as klaag nie. Enigeen van die boswagters sou graag in sy plek wou gegaan het, maar die Squire het nou vir hom uitgekies, en die Squire se woord was by hulle wet.

Niemand behalwe ou Redruth sou dit selfs gewaag het om te brom nie.

Die volgende more is hy en ek te voet weg na die Admiral Benbow, en daar het ek my moeder in wel-stand aangetref. Die kaptein, wat haar soveel moeite aangedoen het, is weg na die plek waar die bouse ophou met beroering. Die Squire het alles laat regmaak, die sitkamer en uithangbord was nuut geskilder, en hy het selfs nuwe meubels gekoop, beste van alles, n mooi leuningstoel agter die toonbank vir my moeder. Buitendien het hy vir haar n seun gestuur as leerjong, sodat sy nie sonder hulp sou wees solank as ek weg was nie.

Dit was toe ek daardie seun sien dat ek vir die eerstemaal my posisie reg verstaan het. Totnogtoe het ek net aan die avontuur wat my voorgelê het gedink, en nooit aan die huis wat ek nou verlaat het nie. Daar het nou vir die eerste keer tranen in my oë gekom toe ek daardie lompe vreemdeling by my moeder sien; hy moes my plek by my moeder inneeni. Ek vrees dat ek die arme seun lelik laat deurloop het; want hy was nuut in sy vak, en ek het dus honderd en een kanse gehad om hom reg te wys en af te snou, en ek het dit met genoeë gedoen.

Ons het die nag daar oorgebly en na middagete die volgende dag is Redruth en ek te voet daarvandaan. So het ek dan afskeid geneem van my moeder en van die ou plekkie waar ek my hele lewe gewoon het en van die ou Admiral Benbow, wat vir my glad nie meer so mooi gelyk het nou dat hy nuut geverf was nie. My laaste gedagte was aan die ou kaptein; ek kon hom nog in my verbeelding langs die strand sien stap met sy groot hoed, aan die een kant opgeslaan, die sabelhou oor sy wang, en sy ou koperverkyker. n Oomblik later het die pad n draai gemaak en ons huis het uit die gesig verdwyn.

Die poskar het ons teen die aand by die Royal George opgelaai. Ek het vasgedruk gesit tussen Redruth en n swaarlywige ou heer, en niteenstaande die vinnige vaart en die koue naglug, moes ek baie gou aan slaap geraak het, want ek weet niks van die hele reis nie, selfs nie dat daar verskeie male vars perde ingespan is nie. Ek het van n gepor in my ribbe wakker geskrik en ontdek dat die dag reeds gebreek het. Voor n groot gebou in n stad het ons stil gehou.

Waar is ons? het ek gevra.

Bristol, sê Tom. Klim af.

Meneer Trelawney was by n herberg agter die dokke tuis, sodat hy n oog kon hou op die werk wat aangaan op die skoener. Ons het daarheen gestap en tot my grootste vreugde moes ons tussen die kaaie deur en langs n menigte groot en klein skepe van verskillende lande. Hier het die matrose lustig onder die werk gesing en daar het n paar ander, hoog bokant my kop soos spinne-koppe aan toue van die mas gehang. Ek was gebore langs die strand, maar dit was vir my of ek nou vir die eerste maal die see te sien kry. Die reuk van teer en seesout was iets nuuts vir my. Ek het die wonderlikste boegbeelde gesien, wat almal ver oor die see gewees het, en orals tussenin stap n menigte ou matrose rond, met oorringe, opgekrulde snorbaarde, lang vlegsels hare, en die wonderlikste manier van loop, half spoggerig en half lomp. As dit konings of aartsbiskoppe was wat my om-ring het, kon ek nie meer in my skik gewees het nie.

En die beste van alles was dat ek nou self op die see gaan, op die see in n skoener, met n bootsman wat op die fluit blaas, en matrose wat sing; en ons gaan n onbekende eiland opsoek, ons gaan verborge skatte op-grawe!

Ek was nog verdiep in hierdie heerlike drome, toe ons opeens voor die deur van n groot herberg kom, waar Squire Trelawney net uitgekome het in n blou offisierspak, met n glimlag op sy gesig, met n uitstekende nabootsing van hoe die matrose stap.

Hier is julle! roep hy, en die dokter het gisteraand al gekom van Londen af. Bravo! Nou is die hele geselskap bymekaar!

O, Meneer, vra ek, wanneer vertrek ons tog?

Vertrek? sę hy. More!

# Chapter 8

## At the Sign of the Spy-glass

WHEN I had done breakfasting the squire gave me a note addressed to John Silver, at the sign of the Spy-glass, and told me I should easily find the place by following the line of the docks and keeping a bright lookout for a little tavern with a large brass telescope for sign. I set off, overjoyed at this opportunity to see some more of the ships and seamen, and picked my way among a great crowd of people and carts and bales, for the dock was now at its busiest, until I found the tavern in question.

It was a bright enough little place of entertainment. The sign was newly painted; the windows had neat red curtains; the floor was cleanly sanded. There was a street on each side and an open door on both, which made the large, low room pretty clear to see in, in spite of clouds of tobacco smoke.

The customers were mostly seafaring men, and they talked so loudly that I hung at the door, almost afraid to enter.

As I was waiting, a man came out of a side room, and at a glance I was sure he must be Long John. His left leg was cut off close by the hip, and

under the left shoulder he carried a crutch, which he managed with wonderful dexterity, hopping about upon it like a bird. He was very tall and strong, with a face as big as a ham—plain and pale, but intelligent and smiling. Indeed, he seemed in the most cheerful spirits, whistling

as he moved about among the tables, with a merry word or a slap on the shoulder for the more favoured of his guests.

Now, to tell you the truth, from the very first mention of Long John in Squire Trelawney's letter I had taken a fear in my mind that he might prove to be the very one-legged sailor

whom I had watched for so long at the old Benbow. But one look at the man before me was enough. I had seen the captain, and Black Dog, and the blind man, Pew, and I thought I knew what a buccaneer was like—a very different creature, according to me, from this clean and pleasant-tempered landlord.

I plucked up courage at once, crossed the threshold, and walked right up to the man where he stood, propped on his crutch, talking to a customer.

"Mr. Silver, sir?" I asked, holding out the note.



"Yes, my lad," said he; "such is my name, to be sure. And who may you be?" And then as he saw the squire's letter, he seemed to me to give something almost like a start. "Oh!" said he, quite loud, and offering his hand. "I see. You are our new cabin-boy; pleased I am to see you."

And he took my hand in his large firm grasp.

Just then one of the customers at the far side rose suddenly and made for the door. It was close by him, and he was out in the street in a moment.

But his hurry had attracted my notice, and I recognized him at glance. It was the tallow-faced man,

wanting two fingers, who had come first to the Admiral Benbow.

"Oh," I cried, "stop him! It's Black Dog!"

"I don't care two coppers who he is," cried Silver. "But he hasn't paid his score. Harry, run and catch him." One of the others who was nearest the door leaped up and started in pursuit.

"If he were Admiral Hawke he shall pay his score," cried Silver; and then, relinquishing my hand, "Who did you say he was?" he asked. "Black what?"

"Dog, sir," said I. Has Mr. Trelawney not told you of the buccaneers? He was one of them." "So?" cried Silver. "In my house! Ben, run and help Harry. One of those swabs, was he? Was that you drinking with him, Morgan? Step up here."

The man whom he called Morgan— an old, grey-haired, mahogany-faced sailor—came forward pretty sheepishly, rolling his quid.

"Now, Morgan," said Long John very sternly, "you never clapped your eyes on that Black—Black Dog before, did you, now?"

"Not I, sir," said Morgan with a salute.

"You didn't know his name, did you?" "No, sir."

"By the powers, Tom Morgan, it's as good for you!" exclaimed the landlord. "If you had been mixed up with the like of that, you would never have put another foot in my house, you may lay to that. And what was he saying to you?"

"I don't rightly know, sir," answered Morgan.

"Do you call that a head on your shoulders, or a blessed dead-eye?" cried Long John. "Don't rightly know, don't you! Perhaps you don't happen to rightly know who you was speaking to, perhaps? Come, now,

what was he jawing—v'yages, cap'ns, ships? Pipe up! What was it?"

"We was a-talkin' of keel-hauling," answered Morgan.

"Keel-hauling, was you? And a mighty suitable thing, too, and you

may lay to that. Get back to your place for a lubber, Tom."

And then, as Morgan rolled back to his seat, Silver added to me in a confidential whisper that was very flattering, as I thought, "He's quite an honest man, Tom Morgan, on'y stupid. And now," he ran on again, aloud, "let's see—Black Dog? No, I don't know the name, not I. Yet I kind of think I've—yes, I've seen the swab. He used to come here with a blind beggar, he used."

"That he did, you may be sure," said I. "I knew that blind man too. His name was Pew."

"It was!" cried Silver, now quite excited. "Pew! That were his name for certain. Ah, he looked a shark, he did! If we run down this Black Dog, now, there'll be news for Cap'n Trelawney! Ben's a good runner; few seamen run better than Ben. He should run him down, hand over hand, by the powers! He talked o' keel-hauling, did he? I'LL keel-haul him!"

All the time he was jerking out these phrases he was stumping up and down the tavern on his crutch, slapping tables with his hand, and giving such a show of excitement as would have convinced an Old Bailey judge or a Bow Street runner. My suspicions had been thoroughly reawakened on finding Black Dog at the Spy-glass, and I watched the cook narrowly. But he was too deep, and too ready, and too clever for me, and by the time the two men had

come back out of breath and confessed that they had lost the track in a crowd, and been scolded like thieves, I would have gone bail for the innocence of Long John Silver. "See here, now, Hawkins," said he, "here's a blessed hard thing on a man like me, now, ain't it? There's Cap'n Trelawney—what's he to think? Here

I have this confounded son of a Dutchman sitting in my own house drinking of my own rum! Here you comes and tells me of it plain; and here I let him give us all the slip before my blessed deadlights! Now, Hawkins, you do me justice with the cap'n. You're a lad, you are, but you're as smart as paint. I see that when you first come in. Now, here it is: What could I do, with this old timber I hobble on? When I was an A B master mariner I'd have come

up alongside of him, hand over hand, and broached him to in a brace of

old shakes, I would; but now—" And then, all of a sudden, he stopped, and his jaw dropped as though he had remembered something.

"The score!" he burst out. "Three goes o' rum! Why, shiver my timbers, if I hadn't forgotten my score!"

And falling on a bench, he laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. I could not help joining, and we laughed together, peal after peal, until the tavern rang again.

"Why, what a precious old sea-calf I am!" he said at last, wiping his

cheeks. "You and me should get on well, Hawkins, for I'll take my davy

I should be rated ship's boy. But come now, stand by to go about. This won't do. Dooty is dooty, messmates. I'll put on my old cockerel hat, and step along of you to Cap'n Trelawney, and report this here affair. For mind you, it's

serious, young Hawkins; and neither you nor me's come out of it with what I should make so bold as to

call credit. Nor you neither, says you; not smart— none of the pair of us smart. But dash my buttons! That was a good un about my score."

And he began to laugh again, and that so heartily, that though I did not see the joke as he did, I was again obliged to join him in his mirth. On our little walk along the quays,

he made himself the most interesting companion, telling me about the different ships that we passed by, their rig, tonnage, and nationality, explaining the work that was going forward—how one was discharging, another taking in cargo, and a third making ready for sea—and every

now and then telling me some little anecdote of ships or seamen or repeating a nautical phrase till I had

learned it perfectly. I began to see that here was one of the best of possible shipmates.

When we got to the inn, the squire and Dr. Livesey were seated together, finishing a quart of ale with a toast in it, before they should go aboard the schooner on a visit of inspection.

Long John told the story from first to last, with a great deal of spirit and the most perfect truth. "That was how it were, now, weren't it, Hawkins?" he would say, now and again, and I could always bear him entirely out.

The two gentlemen regretted that

Black Dog had got away, but we all agreed there was nothing to be done, and after he had been complimented, Long John took up his crutch and departed.

"All hands aboard by four this afternoon," shouted the squire after him.

"Aye, aye, sir," cried the cook, in the passage.

"Well, squire," said Dr. Livesey, "I don't put much faith in your discoveries, as a general thing; but I will say this, John Silver suits me." "The man's a perfect trump," declared the squire.

"And now," added the doctor, "Jim may come on board with us, may he not?"

"To be sure he may," says squire. "Take your hat, Hawkins, and we'll see the ship."

# Chapter 8

## In die Herberg, Die Verkyker

Na die ontbyt het die Squire vir my n briefie geadresseer aan John Silver, Die Verkyker. Ek sou die plek maklik kry, as ek maar net langs die dokke af sou stap, het hy gesê. Ek moes net my oë oophou vir die klein herbergie wat sy uithangbord in die vorm van n koperverkyker het. Ek was baie bly om n geleentheid te hê om meer van die skepe en matrose te sien. My pad was tussen n menigte mense en karre en bale goed deur, totdat ek eindelijk by die herberg uitgekom het.

Dit was n sindelike, gesellige ou plekkie.

Die uithangbord was nuut geverf; daar was netjiese rooi gordyntjies voor die vensters, en skoon sand op die vloer. Daar was strate aan weerskante van die geboutjie en op beide het daar deure uitgegaan wat wawyd oopgestaan het, sodat die groot vertrek duidelik sigbaar was ten spyte van die hangende rookwolke van tabak daarin.

Die besoekers was merendeel seevaarders; an hulle het son lawaai gemaak dat ek in die deur bly staan het, byna te bang om binne te gaan.

Terwyl ek nog daar so staan, kom daar n man uit n syvertrek uit, en ek wis dadelik dat dit Long John was. Sy linkerbeen was kort onderkant die heup af, en onder die linkerarm het hy n kruk gedra, waarmee hy baie handig was. Soos n voël het hy daarop rond gespring. Hy was baie lank en sterk gebou, met n breë gesig, eenvoudig en bleek, maar baie skranders en vriendelik. Terwyl hy so van die een tafel na die ander huppel, het hy n opgewekte melodie gefluit en ek het gedink dat hy in n besonder opgewekte stemming was. Hier-en-daar het hy n grappie gemaak of een van sy klante op die skouer geklop.

Om die waarheid te sê, ek het n heimlike vrees gehad, vandat ek Squire Trelawney se brief gelees het, dat Long John dalk die afbeenmatroos was wat ek vir son lang tyd verwag het by die Admiral Benbow. Maar ek sien nou dadelik dat ek verkeerd was. Ek het die kaptein gesien, en Black Dog, en die blinde man Pew, en was oortuig dat ek nou goed wis hoe n seerower lyk, baie anders as hierdie vriendelike herbergier wat so netjies en fyn van maniere was.

Ek het dadelik weer moed gekry, by die deur ingegaan en reguit na die man geloop waar hy op sy stok geleun het terwyl hy met een van die gaste praat.

Is u meneer Silver? het ek gevra en hom die briefie gegee

Ja, my seun, dit is my naam. En wie is jy?

Dit het vir my gelyk asof hy effens geskrik het toe hy die Squire se brief gelees het.

O, sê hy hardop, en gee my die hand, ek sien jy is ons nuwe kajuitsjong; ek is bly om jou te ontmoet.

Hy gee my n stewige handdruk. Op dieselfde oomblik spring een van die gaste op en hardloop na die deur se kant toe. Maar ek het hom herken. Dit was die bleek-gesig kereel, met die gebrekklike hand, wat eers na die Admiral Benbow gekom het.

Vang hom! skreeu ek; dit is Black Dog!

Dit raak my nie wie hy is nie, sê Silver, maar hy het my nie betaal nie. Harry, hardloop gou en vang hom.

Een van die ander, wat naby die deur gesit het, het opgespring en agterna gehardloop.

Al was hy ook Admiraal Hawke self, dan sou hy nog moes betaal, sê Silver. En toe vra hy skielik: Wat het jy gesê is sy naam? Black wat?

Dog, sê ek. Het Meneer Trelawney u nie vertel van die seerowers nie? Hy was een van hulle.

So? sê Silver. En dit nogal in my huis! Ben, hardloop jy ook, en help vir Harry. Was hy een van daardie vuilgoed? Het hy met jou saam gedrink, Morgan? Kom hierso.

Die man wat hy Morgan noem, n bruingebrande matroos met grys hare kom skamerig vorentoe, en al die tyd rol hy sy pruimpie van die een kies na die ander.

Kyk hier, Morgan, sê Long John, baie ernstig; het jy ooit tevore daardie Black... Black Dog gesien? Nee, Meneer, sê Morgan, en bring sy hand eerbiedig aan sy mus.

Jy het nie geweet wat sy naam is nie, het jy?

Nee, Meneer.

„Dis jou geluk, Tom Morgan! roep Silver uit. As jy jou wil afgee met daardie soort gespuis, hoef jy nooit weer jou voet in my huis te sit nie, hoor? En wat het hy jou nogal vertel?

Ek onthou nie meer nie, Meneer, het Morgan geantwoord.

Het jy n kop op jou skouers, of n pampoen? het

Long John geskree. Jy onthou nie meer nie! Komaan waarvan het julle geklets seereise, kapteins skepe? Vertel. Waarvan was dit?

Ons het gepraat van kielhaal, se Morgan.

Het julle? n Mooi ding om oor te gesels, nie waar nie? Loop maar, Tom, jy is sommer n landloper.

Morgan slinger terug na sy stoel toe, en Silver fluister vir my:

Hy is n doodeerlike man, Tom Morgan, net baie onnosel. En nou, laat ek sien. Black Dog? Nee, ek ken nie die naam nie. En tog dink ek ja, waarlik, ek het die vabond al voorheen gesien. Hy het altyd n blinde bedelaar by hom gehad.

Ja, ek het daardie blinde man ook geken. Sy naam was Pew, het ek

gesê.

Dit was. Pew, dit was die naam! skree Silver, nou glad opgewonde. Hy het vir my son skelm gelyk. As ons nou die Black Dog vang, sal daar nuus wees om vir Meneer Trelawney te vertel. Ben hardloop goed; daars min matrose wat vir Ben kan inhardloop. Hy sal hom vang, so seker as wat. Hyt gepraat van kielhaal, nê? Ek sal hom laat kielhaal!

Solank as hy gepraat het, het hy op en af gestap in die kamer, met sy vuus op die tafels geslaan en so opgewonde gelyk, dat hy die beste regter in die wêreld sou oortuig het van sy opregtheid.

Ek was dadelik vol agterdog gewees toe ek Black Dog daar gesien het en het nou vir Long John goed dopgehou. Maa-r hy was te diep en te slim vir my, en later, toe die twee mans uitasem aangeloop kom en vertel dat hulle hom nie kan kry nie, het hy hulle so sleg gesê, dat ek my kop vir die onskuld van Long John Silver sou gewed het.

Kyk hier, Hawkins, het hy gesê dit is nou regtig ongelukkig dat so iets moes gebeur. Wat sal kaptein

Trelawney daarvan dink? Hier het ek die ellendige Duusman aan my eie tafel, waar hy my eie rum drink! Hier kom jy en vertel my wie hy is; en ek laat hom jou waarlik weg loop onder my neus! Hawkins, jy moet vir my n goeie woordjie by die kaptein doen. Jy is nog maar jonk, maar jy is skrande. Ek het dit sommer gesien toe jy hier inkom. Vertel my nou wat kon ek gedoen het, op hierdie ou houtbeen van my? As ek n gesonde seeman was, soos voorheen, sou ek hom baie gou beet gehad het; maar nou...

Meteens het hy stilgebly en sy gesigspiere het verslap asof hy meteens iets onthou het.

My geldjies! sê hy verslae. Drie glase rum! Bewaar my siel, of ek tog nie my geldjies vergeet het nie!

Hy val op n bank neer, en lag tot die trane oor sy wange rol. Ek moes saam lag, dit was so aansteeklik; en ons het gelag tot die bottels en glase rondom ons geklink het.

Jy en ek sal baie goed klaarkom, Hawkins, sê hy eindelijk, en vee sy oë af. Maar kom, dit sal nie gaan nie. Plig is plig. Ek sal my ou hoed opsit en saam met jou na Kaptein Trelawney toegaan. Ek wil hom die hele ding vertel, want dis ernstig, Hawkins; en ons het maar albei n baie swak figuur gemaak, weet jy. So, by my siel, dit was darem n mooi grap daardie van flussies.

En hy begin weer te lag, en so hartlik, dat ek ook moes inval, al kon ek glad nie die grap sien nie.

Hy was baie gesellig op ons wandeling langs die kaai en het my alles van die verskillende skepe wat ons verbygegaan het vertel, waaraan n mens kon sien of hulle oplaai of aflaai, of klaar was om te vertrek, en nog meer inligting van die aard, wat ek hoogs interessant gevind het.

Ek kon sien dat hy die allerbeste skeepsmaat sou wees.

Toe ons by die herberg kom, was die Squire en Dr. Livesey net klaar om na die skoener te gaan om haar deur te kyk. Long John het die voorval van begin tot einde vertel, presies net soos dit was, en op n boeiende manier. Elke slag het hy met die vraag na my toe gedraai: So het dit gebeur, nie waar nie, Hawkins? En ek kon altyd met hom saamstem.

Die twee here was natuurlik spyt dat Black Dog ontsnap het, maar daar was nou niks aan te doen nie. Hulle bedank Long John, en hy neem toe sy kruk op om te vertrek.

Almal aan boord teen vieruur vanmiddag, roep die Squire agter hom aan.

Ja, ja, Meneer, antwoord die kok.

Wel, Squire, sê Dr. Livesey, ek is nie danig in my skik met alles wat jy hier aangevang het nie; maar ek moet sê dat John Silver my geval.

Hy is n staatmaker, verklaar die Squire.

Mag Jim saamgaan na die skip toe? het die dokter gevra.

Seker mag hy. Sit op jou hoed, Hawkins, en laat ons gaan kyk.

# Chapter 9

## Powder and Arms

THE HISPANIOLA lay some way out, and we went under the figureheads and round the sterns of many other ships, and their cables sometimes grated underneath our keel, and sometimes swung above us. At last, however, we got alongside, and were met and saluted as we stepped aboard by the mate,

Mr. Arrow, a brown old sailor with earrings in his ears and a squint. He and the squire were very thick and friendly, but I soon observed that things were not the same between Mr. Trelawney and the captain. This last was a sharp-looking man who seemed angry with everything on board and was soon to tell us why, for we had hardly got down into the cabin when a sailor followed us.

"Captain Smollett, sir, axing to speak with you," said he.

"I am always at the captain's orders. Show him in," said the squire.

The captain, who was close behind

his messenger, entered at once and shut the door behind him.

"Well, Captain Smollett, what have you to say? All well, I hope; all shipshape and seaworthy?"

"Well, sir," said the captain, "better speak plain, I believe, even at the risk of offence. I don't like this cruise; I don't like the men; and I don't like my officer. That's short and sweet."

"Perhaps, sir, you don't like the ship?" inquired the squire, very angry, as I could see.

"I can't speak as to that, sir, not having seen her tried," said the captain. "She seems a clever craft; more I can't say."

"Possibly, sir, you may not like your employer, either?" says the squire. But here Dr. Livesey cut in.

"Stay a bit," said he, "stay a bit. No use of such questions as that but to produce ill feeling. The captain has said too much or he has said too little, and I'm bound to say that I require an explanation of his words. You don't, you say, like this cruise. Now, why?"

"I was engaged, sir, on what we call sealed orders, to sail this ship for that gentleman where he should bid me," said the captain. "So far so good. But now I find that every man before the mast knows more than I do. I don't call that fair, now, do you?"

"No," said Dr. Livesey, "I don't." "Next," said the captain, "I learn we



are going after treasure—hear it from my own hands, mind you. Now, treasure is ticklish work; I don't like treasure voyages on any account, and I don't like them, above all, when they are secret and when (begging your pardon, Mr. Trelawney) the secret has been told to the parrot." "Silver's parrot?" asked the squire. "It's a way of speaking," said the captain. "Blabbed, I mean. It's my belief neither of you gentlemen know

what you are about, but I'll tell you my way of it— life or death, and a close run."

"That is all clear, and, I dare say, true enough," replied Dr. Livesey.

"We take the risk, but we are not so ignorant as you believe us. Next, you say you don't like the crew. Are they not good seamen?"

"I don't like them, sir," returned Captain Smollett. "And I think I should have had the choosing of my own hands, if you go to that."

"Perhaps you should," replied the doctor. "My friend should, perhaps, have taken you along with him; but the slight, if there be one, was unintentional. And you don't like Mr. Arrow?"

"I don't, sir. I believe he's a good seaman, but he's too free with the crew to be a good officer. A mate should keep himself to himself— shouldn't drink with the men before the mast!"

"Do you mean he drinks?" cried the squire.

"No, sir," replied the captain, "only that he's too familiar."

"Well, now, and the short and long of it, captain?" asked the doctor.

"Tell us what you want."

"Well, gentlemen, are you determined to go on this cruise?"

"Like iron," answered the squire. "Very good," said the captain.

"Then, as you've heard me very patiently, saying things that I could not prove, hear me a few words more. They are putting the powder and the arms in the fore hold. Now, you have a good place under the cabin; why not put them there?— first point. Then, you are bringing four of your own people with you, and they tell me some of them are to be berthed forward. Why not give them the berths here beside the cabin?— second point."

"Any more?" asked Mr. Trelawney. "One more," said the captain.

"There's been too much blabbing already."

"Far too much," agreed the doctor. "I'll tell you what I've heard myself," continued Captain Smollett: "that

you have a map of an island, that there's crosses on the map to show where treasure is, and that the island lies—" And then he named the latitude and longitude exactly.

"I never told that," cried the squire, "to a soul!"

"The hands know it, sir," returned the captain.

"Livesey, that must have been you or

Hawkins," cried the squire.

"It doesn't much matter who it was,"

replied the doctor. And I could see that neither he nor the captain paid much regard to Mr. Trelawney's protestations. Neither did I, to be sure, he was so loose a talker; yet in this case I believe he was really right and that nobody had told the situation of the island.

"Well, gentlemen," continued the captain, "I don't know who has this map; but I make it a point, it shall be kept secret even from me and Mr. Arrow. Otherwise I would ask you to let me resign."

"I see," said the doctor. "You wish us to keep this matter dark and to make a garrison of the stern part of

the ship, manned with my friend's own people, and provided with all the arms and powder on board. In other words, you fear a mutiny."

"Sir," said Captain Smollett, "with no intention to take offence, I deny your right to put words into my mouth. No captain, sir, would be justified in going to sea at all if he

had ground enough to say that. As for Mr. Arrow, I believe him thoroughly honest; some of the men are the

same; all may be for what I know. But I am responsible for the ship's safety and the life of every man Jack aboard of her. I see things going, as I think, not quite right. And I ask you

to take certain precautions or let me resign my berth. And that's all."

"Captain Smollett," began the doctor with a smile, "did ever you hear the fable of the mountain and the mouse? You'll excuse me, I dare say, but you remind me of that fable. When you came in here, I'll stake my wig, you meant more than this."

"Doctor," said the captain, "you are smart. When I came in here I meant to get discharged. I had no thought that Mr. Trelawney would hear a word."

"No more I would," cried the squire. "Had Livesey not been here I should have seen you to the deuce. As it is, I

have heard you. I will do as you desire, but I think the worse of you."

"That's as you please, sir," said the captain. "You'll find I do my duty."

And with that he took his leave. "Trelawney," said the doctor, "contrary to all my notions, I believed you have managed to get two honest men on board with you— that man and John Silver."

"Silver, if you like," cried the squire; "but as for that intolerable humbug, I declare I think his conduct unmanly, unsailorly, and downright un-English."

"Well," says the doctor, "we shall see."

When we came on deck, the men had begun already to take out the arms and powder, yo-ho-ing at their work, while the captain and Mr. Arrow stood by superintending.

The new arrangement was quite to my liking. The whole schooner had been overhauled; six berths had been made astern out of what had

been the after-part of the main hold; and this set of cabins was only joined to the galley and fore-castle by a sparred passage on the port side. It had been originally meant that the captain, Mr. Arrow, Hunter, Joyce, the doctor,

and the squire were to occupy these six berths. Now Redruth and I were

to get two of them and Mr. Arrow and the captain were to sleep on deck in the companion, which had been enlarged on each side till you might almost have called it a round-house. Very low it was still, of course; but there was room to swing two hammocks, and even the mate seemed pleased with the arrangement. Even he, perhaps, had been doubtful as to the crew, but that is only guess, for as you shall hear, we had not long the benefit of his opinion.

We were all hard at work, changing the powder and the berths, when the last man or two, and Long John

along with them, came off in a shore-boat.

The cook came up the side like a monkey for cleverness, and as soon as he saw what was doing, "So ho, mates!" says he. "What's this?" "We're a-changing of the powder, Jack," answers one.

"Why, by the powers," cried Long John, "if we do, we'll miss the morning tide!"

"My orders!" said the captain shortly. "You may go below, my man. Hands will want supper." "Aye, aye, sir," answered the cook, and touching his forelock, he disappeared at once in the direction of his galley.

"That's a good man, captain," said the doctor.

"Very likely, sir," replied Captain Smollett. "Easy with that, men—easy," he ran on, to the fellows who were shifting the powder; and then suddenly observing me examining the swivel we carried amidships, a long brass nine, "Here you, ship's boy," he cried, "out o' that! Off with you to the cook and get some work." And then as I was hurrying off I heard him say, quite loudly, to the doctor, "I'll have no favourites on my ship."

I assure you I was quite of the

squire's way of thinking, and hated the captain deeply.

# Chapter 9

## Kruit en Wapens

Die Hispaniola het n hele ent die see in geleë, en ons het dus onder die boegbeelde deur, en om die agterstewe van meer as een skip gevaar, sodat hulle kabeltou nou en dan teen die kiel van ons boot geskuur het, of anders hoog bokant ons koppe geswaai het. Eindelik kom ons langs die Hispaniola aan, waar die stuurman, Arrow, n ou bruin seeman met skeel oë en ringe in sy ore, ons verwelkom het. Hy en die Squire was reeds goed be-vriend, maar ek het gou gemerk dat Meneer Trelawney en die kaptein niks van mekaar gehou het nie. Laasge-noemde was n man met n skerp gesig, wat gelyk het asof hy met alles aan boord ontevrede is. Hy het nie lank gewag om ons daarvan te vertel nie, want ons was skaars in die kajuit of n matroos kom agter ons aan.

Kaptein Smollett wil graag met u praat, meneer, sê hy.

Ek is altyd tot sy diens, het die Squire gesê. Laat hom maar binnekom.

Die kaptein, wat kort agter sy boodskapper was, kom toe dadelik in en maak die deur agter hom toe.

Wel, Kaptein Smollett, wat het u te vertel? Alles wel, hoop ek, en klaar om te vertrek?

Wel, meneer, sê die kaptein, dis altyd beste om reguit te praat, al gee dit ook aanstoot. Ek hou nie van hierdie tog nie, ek hou nie van die matrose nie, en nog minder van die stuurman. Dis nou maar eenmaal klaar. Miskien hou jy ook nie van die skip nie? het die Squire gesê, en ek kon sien dat hy baie kwaad was.

Dit kan ek nie sê nie, want ek het dit nog nie probeer nie. Dit lyk n oulike vaartuig; meer kan ek nie sê nie. Miskien hou jy ook nie van my nie? vra die Squire. Maar hier kom Dr. Livesey tussenbei. Wag n bietjie, sê hy, wag n bietjie. Sulke vrae gee altyd rusie af. Die kaptein het óf te min gesê óf te veel, en ek moet sê dat ek graag n uitleg van sy woorde wil hê. U hou nie van die tog nie, waarom nie?

Ek het ooreengekom met hierdie meneer om die skip vir hom te bring waar hy dit wil he, sonder iets uit te vra, sê die kaptein Goed en wel, maar nou vind ek uit dat die geringste matroos daar meer van af weet as ek. Ek vra u, is dit nou reg?

Nee, sê die dokter, dit is nie.

Dan, sê die kaptein, ek hoor ons gaan goud soek wat ęrens begrawe is, ek hoot dit van my eie bemanning, moet u weet. Nou, ek hou nie van n jag agter verborge skatte aan nie, veral as

dit n geheim moet bly, en as die geheim dan aan die papegaai vertel word. Silver se papegaai? vra die Squire.

Dit is maar my manier van praat, ek bedoel daar is te veel oor gebabbel. Ek glo vas dat geen van u twee besef wat u gaan aanvang nie. Maar my gedagte is dat dit n geval van lewe of dood sal afgee.

Dit is alles duidelik, sê die dokter. Ons neem die risiko; maar ons is darem nie so onkundig as wat u dink nie. Dan, u hou nie van die bemanning nie. Is hulle nie geskikte seelui nie?

Hulle geval my nie, meneer, sê die kaptein. En ek dink ek moes die reg gehad het om my eie bemanning te kies.

Miskien wel, sê Dr. Livesey. Maar ek kan u verseker dat dit sonder opset gedoen is, en dat dit nie my vriend se bedoeling was om u te kwes nie. En u hou niks van Meneer Arrow nie?

Nee meneer. Ek glo hy is n goeie seeman; maar hy is te vry met die matrose om n goeie offisier te wees, n Stuurman moet hom op sy plek hou, en nie saam drink met die bemanning nie.

Bedoel u dat hy te veel drink? vra die Squire.

Nee, meneer, antwoord die kaptein, net dat hy en die matrose nie so intiem moet raak nie.

Kortom, wat wil u he, kaptein? vra die dokter.

Is dit u vaste besluit om op hierdie tog te gaan?

So vas soos n muur, sê die Squire.

Goed, sê die kaptein. U het my sover geduldig aangehoor, en ek het dinge gesê wat ek nie kan bewys nie. Laat my nou nog n paar woordjies sê. Hulle is besig om die kruit en wapens in die voorruim te bêre. Daar is n goeie plek daarvoor hier onder u kajuit. Hoekom kan dit nie hierheen gebring word nie? Dan, u neem vier van u eie bediendes mee, en hulle vertel my dat hulle vorentoe moet slaap. Waarom kan hulle nie slaapplek kry hier langs aan die kajuit nie?

Nog iets? vra Meneer Trelawney.

Net een ding, sê die kaptein. Daar is reeds te veel gepraat.

Glad te veel, stem die dokter saam.

Ek sal u vertel wat ek self gehoor het, gaan kaptein Smollett voort: Dat u n kaart het van n eiland; dat daar kruisies op die kaart staan om te wys waar die skat lê; en dat die eiland lê... en her het hy die lengte en breedte op n haar genoem.

Dit het ek aan geen sterweling vertel nie, sê die Squire.

Die matrose weet dit almal, antwoord die kaptein. Livesey, dan moet dit jy of Hawkins wees.

Dit maak nie saak wie dit is nie, antwoord die dokter, en ek kon sien dat hy hom net so min as die kaptein steur aan die versekering van die Squire. Om die waarheid te sê, ek ook nie, want hy was te los met sy tong. Maar tog glo ek dat hy hierdie geval reg was, en dat niemand die ligging van die eiland verklap het nie.

Wel, here, gaan die kaptein voort, ek weet nie wie die kaart in besit het nie, maar nou staan ek daarop dat dit n geheim bly, selfs vir my en Meneer Arrow. So nie, dan moet ek u vra om my dadelik my ontslag te gee. Ek begryp u, sê die dokter. U wil hê dat ons die saak moet dig hou, en dat ons van die agterdele n soort vesting moet maak, beman met my vriend se eie mense, en waar al die kruit en wapens kan geberg word. Met ander woorde, u is bang vir muitery.

Met u verlof, dokter, sê Kaptein Smollett, ek gee u nie die reg om my woorde in die mond te lê wat ek nie gebesig het nie. Geen kaptein het die reg om op see

te gaan met n bemanning waarvan hy rede het om so iets te vrees nie. Wat Meneer Arrow betref, ek glo vas dat hy doodeerlik is; party van die matrose ook; miskien almal, ek weet nie. Maar ek is verantwoordelik vir hierdie skip en vir die lewe van elke man aan boord. Ek sien dat sake nie verloop soos dit behoort nie. En ek vra u om sekere voorsorgsmaatreëls te neem, of my te laat bedank. Dis al.

Kaptein Smollett, sê die dokter met n glimlag, het u ooit die fabel van die berg en die muis gehoor? Ver-skoon my maar u herinner my aan daardie fabel. Ek wed, toe u hier binnegekom het, was u van plan om baie meer te sê as wat u gesê het.

Dokter, sê die kaptein, u is baie knap. Toe ek hier in gekom het was dit met die bedoeling om my ontslag te vra. Ek het nie verwag dat Meneer Trelawney na n enkele woord sou luister nie.

Ek sou ook nie, vervolg die Squire, as Livesey nie hier gewees het nie, sou ek jou na die ongeluk gejaag het. Soos dit is, het ek nou geluister. Ek sal doen wat jy verlang, maar ek moet sê dat ek nie baie van jou dink nie.

Dit is u saak, Meneer. U sal gou uitvind dat ek my plig doen.

En hiermee gaan die kaptein die deur uit.

Trelawney, sê die dokter, bo al my verwagtings, het dit jou tog geluk om ten minste twee eerlike kereels aan boord te kry daardie man en John Silver.

Silver, ja, sê die Squire, maar wat daardie ver-waande skepsel betref, ek dink sy gedrag is nie manlik nie, onwaardig vir n seeman, en totaal on-Engels. Wel, sê die dokter, ons sal sien.

Toe ons op dek kom, was die matrose al aan oorpak van die kruit en wapens. Hulle sing n opgewekte liedjie daarby, terwyl die kaptein en Mnr. Arrow staan en toesig hou.

Ek was hoogs in my skik met die boot soos dit nou ingerig was. Die hele boel was verander, ses slaapplekke was in die agterkant gemaak, en hierdie kajuite was geskei van die kombuis en die bak deur n gang wat afgesluit was met sparre. Eers was die plan dat die kaptein, Meneer Arrow, Hunter, Joyce, die dokter en die Squire hierdie ses slaapplekke sou kry. Maar nou slaap Redruth en ek hier; Meneer

Arrow en die kaptein slaap op dek onder die kapluik, wat na alkante toe ver-groot was sodat dit byna n hut gelyk het. Dit was natuurlik nog baie laag, maar daar was plek vir twee hangmatte, en selfs die stuurman lyk in sy skik daarmee. Hy was glo self maar n bietjie skrikkerig vir die manskappe; maar ek kan dit nie met sekerheid sê nie, want, soos, u sal hoor, het ons nie lank die voorreg gehad om sy mening te hoor nie.

Ons was almal hard aan die werk met die oorlaai van die kruit en die beddegoed, toe die laaste paar matrose en Long John by hulle in n skuit aangevaar kom.

Die kok klim soos n bobbejaan teen die kant van die skip op, en toe hy sien wat ons maak, skreeu hy dadelik: So, ne, maats? Wat beteken dit?

Ons laai die kruit oor na n ander plek toe, Jack, sê een.

Wel, by my Grootjie, sê Long John, dan kom ons nooit weg voor die gety nie.

My bevel! sê die kaptein kortaf. Jy mag kombuis toe gaan en kyk na die kos. Die matrose is al honger.

Seker, seker, kaptein, sê die kok, en bring sy hand aan sy mus. Toe verdwyn hy vinnig in die rigting van die kombuis.

Dis n gawe kerel daardie, kaptein, sê die dokter.

Dit kan wees, Meneer, sê Kaptein Smollet. Saggies, saggies met daardie goed, sê hy vir die mans wat die kruit uitsleep. Toe sien hy my skielik raak. Ek het die kanon op die middeldek staan en bekyk. Dit was n lang kopernegeponder. Hier jy, seun, skree hy, gee pad daar. Loop na die kok toe en vra vir hom werk.

En toe ek haastig wegloop, hoor ek hom hardop vir die dokter sê:

Ek sal geen gunsteling op my skip toelaat nie.

Van dié oomblik af was ek dit volkome eens met die Squire, en het ek die kaptein gehaat uit die diepste van my siel.

# Chapter 10

## The Voyage

ALL that night we were in a great bustle getting things stowed in their place, and boatfuls of the squire's friends, Mr. Blandly and the like, coming off to wish him a good voyage and a safe return. We never had a night at the Admiral Benbow when I had half the work; and I was dog-tired when, a little before dawn, the boatswain sounded his pipe and the crew began to man the capstan-bars. I might have been twice as

weary, yet I would not have left the deck, all was so new and interesting to me—the brief commands, the shrill note of the whistle, the men bustling to their places in the glimmer of the ship's lanterns.

"Now, Barbecue, tip us a stave," cried one voice.

"The old one," cried another.

"Aye, aye, mates," said Long John, who was standing by, with his crutch under his arm, and at once broke out in the air and words I knew so well: "Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—"

And then the whole crew bore chorus:—

"Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

And at the third "Ho!" drove the bars before them with a will.

Even at that exciting moment it carried me back to the old Admiral Benbow in a second, and I seemed to hear the voice of the captain piping in the chorus. But soon the anchor was short up; soon it was hanging dripping at the bows; soon

the sails began to draw, and the land and shipping to flit by on either side; and before I could lie down to snatch an hour of slumber the HISPANIOLA had begun her voyage to the Isle of Treasure.

I am not going to relate that voyage

in detail. It was fairly prosperous. The ship proved to be a good ship, the crew were capable seamen, and the captain thoroughly understood his business. But before we came the length of Treasure Island, two or three things had happened which require to be known.

Mr. Arrow, first of all, turned out even worse than the captain had feared. He had no command among the men, and people did what they pleased with him. But that was by no means the worst of it, for after a day or two at sea he began to appear on deck with hazy eye, red cheeks, stuttering tongue, and other marks of drunkenness. Time after time he was ordered below in disgrace.



Sometimes he fell and cut himself; sometimes he lay all day long in his little bunk at one side of the companion; sometimes for a day or two he would be almost sober and attend to his work at least passably. In the meantime, we could never make out where he got the drink. That was the ship's mystery. Watch him as we pleased, we could do nothing to solve it; and when we

asked him to his face, he would only laugh if he were drunk, and if he were sober deny solemnly that he ever tasted anything but water.

He was not only useless as an officer and a bad influence amongst the men, but it was plain that at this rate he must soon kill himself outright, so nobody was much surprised, nor very sorry, when one dark night, with a head sea, he disappeared entirely and was seen no more.

"Overboard!" said the captain. "Well, gentlemen, that saves the trouble of putting him in irons."

But there we were, without a mate; and it was necessary, of course, to advance one of the men. The boatswain, Job Anderson, was the likeliest man aboard, and though he

kept his old title, he served in a way as mate. Mr. Trelawney had followed the sea, and his knowledge made him very useful, for he often took a watch himself in easy weather. And the coxswain, Israel Hands, was a careful, wily, old, experienced seaman who could be trusted at a pinch with almost anything.

He was a great confidant of Long

John Silver, and so the mention of

his name leads me on to speak of our ship's cook, Barbecue, as the men called him.

Aboard ship he carried his crutch by a lanyard round his neck, to have both hands as free as possible. It was something to see him wedge the foot of the crutch against a bulkhead, and propped against it, yielding to every movement of the ship, get on with his cooking like someone safe ashore. Still more strange was it to see him in the heaviest of weather cross the deck. He had a line or two rigged up to help him across the widest spaces—Long John's earrings, they were called; and he would hand himself from one place to another, now using the crutch, now trailing it alongside by the lanyard, as quickly as another man could walk. Yet

some of the men who had sailed with

him before expressed their pity to see him so reduced.

"He's no common man, Barbecue," said the coxswain to me. "He had good schooling in his young days and can speak like a book when so minded; and brave—a lion's nothing alongside of Long John! I seen him grapple four and knock their heads together—him unarmed."

All the crew respected and even obeyed him. He had a way of talking

to each and doing everybody some particular service. To me he was unweariedly kind, and always glad to see me in the galley, which he kept as clean as a new pin, the dishes hanging up burnished and his parrot in a cage in one corner. "Come away, Hawkins," he would say; "come and have a yarn with John. Nobody more welcome than yourself, my son. Sit you down and hear the news. Here's Cap'n Flint—I calls my parrot Cap'n Flint, after the famous buccaneer—here's Cap'n Flint predicting success to our v'yage. Wasn't you, cap'n?"

And the parrot would say, with great rapidity, "Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!" till you wondered that it was not out of breath, or till John threw his handkerchief over the cage.

"Now, that bird," he would say, "is, maybe, two hundred years old, Hawkins—they live forever mostly; and if anybody's seen more wickedness, it must be the devil himself. She's sailed with England, the great Cap'n England, the pirate. She's been at Madagascar, and at Malabar, and Surinam, and Providence, and Portobello. She was at the fishing up of the wrecked plate ships. It's there she learned

'Pieces of eight,' and little wonder;

three hundred and fifty thousand of

'em, Hawkins! She was at the boarding of the viceroy of the Indies out of Goa, she was; and to look at

her you would think she was a babby. But you smelt powder— didn't you, cap'n?"

"Stand by to go about," the parrot would scream.

"Ah, she's a handsome craft, she is," the cook would say, and give her sugar from his pocket, and then the bird would peck at the bars and swear straight on, passing belief for wickedness. "There," John would add, "you can't touch pitch and not

be mucked, lad. Here's this poor old innocent bird o' mine swearing blue fire, and none the wiser, you may lay to that. She would swear the same,

in a manner of speaking, before

chaplain." And John would touch his forelock with a solemn way he had that made me think he was the best of men.

In the meantime, the squire and Captain Smollett were still on pretty distant terms with one another. The squire made no bones about the matter; he despised the captain. The captain, on his part, never spoke but when he was spoken to, and then sharp and short and dry, and not a word wasted. He owned, when driven into a corner, that he seemed to have been wrong about the crew, that some of them were as brisk as

he wanted to see and all had

behaved fairly well. As for the ship, he had taken a downright fancy to

her. "She'll lie a point nearer the wind than a man has a right to expect of his own married wife, sir. But,"

he would add, "all I say is, we're not home again, and I don't like the cruise."

The squire, at this, would turn away and march up and down the deck, chin in air.

"A trifle more of that man," he would say, "and I shall explode." We had some heavy weather, which only proved the qualities of the HISPANIOLA. Every man on board seemed well content, and they must

have been hard to please if they had been otherwise, for it is my belief there was never a ship's company so spoiled since Noah put to sea. Double grog was going on the least excuse; there was duff on odd days, as, for instance, if the squire heard it was any man's birthday, and always

a barrel of apples standing broached in the waist for anyone to help himself that had a fancy.

"Never knew good come of it yet," the captain said to Dr. Livesey. "Spoil forecastle hands, make devils. That's my belief."

But good did come of the apple barrel, as you shall hear, for if it had not been for that, we should have

had no note of warning and might all have perished by the hand of treachery.

This was how it came about.

We had run up the trades to get the wind of the island we were after—I am not allowed to be more plain—and now we were running down for it with a bright lookout day and

night. It was about the last day of our outward voyage by the largest computation; some time that night, or at latest before noon of the morrow, we should sight the Treasure Island. We were heading S.S.W. and had a steady breeze abeam and a quiet sea.

The HISPANIOLA rolled steadily, dipping her bowsprit now and then with a whiff of spray. All was drawing alow and aloft; everyone was in the bravest spirits because we were now so near an end of the first part of our adventure.

Now, just after sundown, when all my work was over and I was on my way to my berth, it occurred to me that I should like an apple. I ran on deck. The watch was all forward looking out for the island. The man at the helm was watching the luff of

the sail and whistling away gently to himself, and that was the only sound excepting the swish of the sea

against the bows and around the sides of the ship.

In I got bodily into the apple barrel, and found there was scarce an

apple left; but sitting down there in the dark, what with the sound of the waters and the rocking movement of the ship, I had either fallen asleep or was on the point of doing so when a heavy man sat down with rather a clash close by. The barrel shook as he leaned his shoulders against it, and I was just about to jump up when the man began to speak. It was Silver's voice, and before I had heard a dozen words, I would not have shown myself for all the world, but lay there, trembling and listening, in the extreme of fear and curiosity, for from these dozen words I understood that the lives of all the honest men aboard depended upon me alone.

# Chapter 10

## Die Seereis

Die hele nag was ons druk besig om alles in orde te kry en elke ding op die regte plek te bêre, en gedurig kom daar skuite vol vriende van die Squire, soos Meneer Blandly en ander, wat hom goeie reis kom toewens, en n veilige tuiskoms. Ek het nooit die helfte soveel werk te doen gehad by die Admiral Benbow nie, en ek was doodmoeg toe die bootsman so teen dagbreek sy fluitjie blaas, en die matrose random die spil gaan staan. Al was ek ook nog tweemaal so moeg, sou ek tog nooit die dek verlaat het nie; dit was alles so nuut en interessant vir my, die kortaf bevele, die skerp geluid van die fluit, die matrose wat draf na hulle plekke toe by die flikkering van die lanterns.

Komaan, Barbecue, sit vir ons n deuntjie in, sê iemand.

Die ou deuntjie, sê n ander.

Seker, maats, sê Long John, wat daar by staan en kyk, met sy kruk onder sy arm, en meteens begin' hardop sing, dieselfde wysie wat ek so goed ken.

Vyftien man op die dooie se kis.

En die hele bemanning val in by die koor:

Jo-ho-ho, en n bottel vol rum!

En by die derde ho stoot hulle die spil met geweld voor hulle uit.

Selfs op hierdie oomblik van opgewondenheid, voer die liedjie my dadelik terug na die ou Admiral Ben-bow en ek het my verbeel dat ek die stem van die kaptein hoor saamsing by die koor. Maar die anker was gelig; gou hang dit vasmekaak teen die boeg van die skip en kort daarna begin die seile te vul, en die land en skepe by ons verby te gly; en voor ek nog kon gaan le om n bietjie te slaap, was die Hispaniola al op pad na Skateiland toe.

Ek gaan nie al die besonderhede van die reis beskrywe nie. Oor die algemeen was dit baie voorspoedig. Die skip het bewys gelever dat dit goed was, die bemanning het hulle werk verstaan, en die kaptein was n uitnemende gesagvoerder. Maar voordat ons Skateiland bereik het, het daar een of twee dinge gebeur wat ek graag wil vertel.

In die eerste plek het Meneer Arrow gewys dat hy nog slegter was as wat die kaptein vermoed het. Hy het geen gesag by die matrose ingeboesem nie, en almal het gemaak wat hulle wou met hom. Maar dit was nog glad nie die ergste nie; want n paar dae na ons uit die hawe weg is, kom hy op dek met dowwe oë, rooi wange, n hakkelsem, en ander tekens van dronkenskap. Keer op keer moes hy weggestuurd word met n strawwe berisping. Party keer het hy geval en

ernstige kneusplekke opgedoen; soms lê hy die hele dag op sy bankie; en dan

was hy weer vir n hele dag nugter, en kon sy werk so op n manier doen.

Ons kon nie agterkom waar hy die drank vandaan kry nie. Dit was n sheepsgeheim. Hoe meer ons hom dophou, hoe minder kon ons die raaisel oplos. As ons hom dit reguit vra solank as hy dronk is, lag hy net, en as hy nugter is hou hy vol dat hy nooit iets anders as water drink nie.

Hy was nie alleen nutteloos as offisier nie, maar had ook n baie slegte invloed op die matrose, en dit was duidelik dat hy gou sy einde tegemoet sou gaan, as hy so aangaan. Niemand was baie verwonderd, of selfs jammer toe hy op n donker aand, toe die see hoog was, skielik vermis word nie.

Oorboord! sê die kaptein. Wel, dit spaar ons die moeite om vir hom boeie aan te sit.

Maar nou was ons sonder n stuurman; en dit was natuurlik nodig om een van die ander in sy plek aan te stel. Die bootsman, Job Anderson, was die geskikste man aan boord, en hy het toe op n manier as stuurman gedien, maar het nog sy ou titel behou. Meneer Trelawsey het die see goed geken, en sy kennis het nou goed van pas gekom, want hy het dikwels self wag gestaan as dit mooi weer was. En die koksmaat, Israel Hands, was n versigtige, deur en deur ervare seeman, wat enige werk kon onderneem, as die nood aan die man kom.

Hands was die groot vertroueling van Long John Silver, en nou dat ek sy naam noem, dink ek meteens aan ons skeepkok, Barbecue, soos die matrose hom ge-noem het.

Aan boord het hy sy kruk aan n lus om sy nek gedra, sodat hy albei hande vry kon he. Dit was die moeite wêrd om te sien hoe hy die onderste punt van die kruk teen die beskot aan vasdruk, en dan daar teen aan geleun staan en werk het, so gemaklik asof hy veilig op land was. Nog snaakser was dit om hom oor die dek te sien gaan in stormagtige weer. Hier en daar was n tou oor die breedste plekke gespan om hom te help, Long John se oorringe, het die matrose dit genoem; en hy swaai sy lyf van die een plek na die ander, so vinnig as wat n gewone mens sou loop, soms met die behulp van die kruk, en dan weer het hy dit aan die riem af laat hang. Party van die bemanning wat vroeër met hom saam gevaar het, kon darem nie nalaat om hulle spyt te kenne te gee dat hy nou so vermink was nie.

Hy is nie sommer n gewone mens nie, die Barbecue, sê die koksmaat vir my. Hy het goeie skool gehad in sy jong dae, en kan praat soos n boek as hy lus het. En dapper n leeu is n mooi een teen Long John! Ek het hom vier man gelyk sien pak, en hulle koppe teen-mekaar sien slaan, en dit nogal ongewapend.

Die hele bemanning het ontsag vir hom gehad, en hom selfs gehoorsaam. Hy het die slag gehad om met elkeen te gesels, en vir iedereen n diensie te bewys. Met my was hy altyd vriendelik; ek was altyd welkom in die kombuis, wat hy so netjies gehou het as n nuwe sikspens; die potte en panne hang blink aan die muur, en sy papegaai sit in sy koutjie in n hoek.

Hawkins, het hy altyd gesê, kom gesels met ou John. Niemand kan meer welkom wees as jy nie. Gaan sit, en vertel my die nuus. Kaptein Flint daar ek noem my papegaai Kaptein Flint, na die berugte seerower, Kaptein Flint voorspel ons n goeie reis. Nie waar nie, kaptein?

En dan antwoord die papegaai so vinnig as wat hy kan: Spaanse dollars! Spaanse dollars! Spaanse dollars! tot hy uitasem raak, of totdat John sy sakdoek oor die kou gooi.

Sien jy hierdie voël, vertel John, hy is op sy min-ste twee honderd jaar oud, Hawkins die goed leef

mos vir ewig; en as daar n goddeloser ding bestaan as hy, dan moet dit die duiwel self wees. Hy het verskeie maal saamgereis met Engeland, die groot Kaptein Engeland, die seerower. Hy was al in Madagascar, en in Malabar, in Suriname en Providence en Portobello. Hy was daarby toe die duikers afgestuur is agter die skepe van die Silwervloot wat gesink is. Dit was daar waar hy die woorde „Spaanse dollars geleer het. En geen wonder nie; daar was driehonderd en vyftigduisend, Hawkins! Hy was by toe die onderkoning van Indië naby Goa gevang is; en as jy so na hom kyk, sou jy sê hy is n babetjie! Maar jy het al kruit geruik, nie waar nie, kaptein?

Staan klaar om te vertrek! skreeu die papegaai.

A, hy is n gawe vaartuig, is hy nie? sê die kok, en dan voer hy die voël met klontjies wat hy uit sy sak haal, en wat hom al hoe erger laat raas en vloek.

Sien jy, Jim, n mens kan nie aan teer raak sonder om jou te besmeer nie. Hier is die arme onnosele ou voël van my aan vloek soos n ketter, en hy verstaan daar tog niks van nie, weet jy. Hy sou dieselfde doen al staan die predikant daarby. En John vee sy hand oor sy voorkop met son sedige gesig, dat n mens sou dink hy is die onskuldigste mens op die wêreld.

Intussen het die verhouding tussen kaptein Smollett en die Squire niks beter geword nie. Die Squire het dit glad nie weggesteek dat hy die kaptein verag nie. Die kaptein weer, het niks gepraat nie behalwe wanneer hom iets gevra word, en dan kortaf en droog, sonder om een woord te veel te sê. Hy het erken, toe dit hom op die man af gevra word, dat die bemanning nie so' sleg was as wat hy gedink het nie, en dat hulle gedrag tot-nogtoe uitstekend was. Wat die skip betref, op die was hy skoon verlief. Sy is so gehoorsaam as wat n man dit ooit kan

verwag van sy wettige vrou, se hy dikwels.

Maar, voeg hy daarby, al wat ek kan se, is ons is nog nie tuis nie, en ek hou niks van hierdie reis nie.

Dan draai die Squire driftig om en stap die dek op en af, kop in die lug. Nog n bietjie meer van daardie man se geselskap, se hy, dan bars ek.

Ons het n paar keer slegte weer gehad, maar daardeur het die goeie hoedanighede van die Hispaniola juis mooi aan die lig gekom. Iedereen aan boord was gelukkig en tevrede en dit kon ook nie anders nie, want ek glo nie dat die bemanning van n skip al ooit son lekker lewe gehad het van die dag af dat Noag die ark gebou het nie. Kort-kort word daar dubbele rantsoen aan drank uitgedeel; as een of ander verjaar was daar fees; en op die voordek het altyd n vat met appels gestaan, vir enigeen wat lus het om te eet.

Ek het nog nooit gesien dat daar iets goeds van kom nie, se die kaptein aan Dr. Livesey. Bederf die kerels, en jy maak van hulle duiwels.

Maar uit die appelvat het wel iets goeds gekom. As die nie daar gewees het nie, sou ons seker ongewaarsku gebly het, en almal omgekom het deur die hand van verraaiers.

Dit het so gekom: Ons moes skerp teen die wind op seil om in die passaat te kom van die eiland wat ons soek, (ek mag nie duideliker praat nie) en nou gaan ons reg daarop af, met n skerp uitkyk dag en nag. Dit was byna die laaste dag van die uitreis, volgens die ruimste berekening; die nag, of op sy laaste, vroeg die volgende more, sou ons Skateiland in die gesig kry. Ons stuur S.S.W. en daar was n egalige bries en n kalm see. Die Hispaniola gly stadig voort, met nou en dan n vlokkie skuim op die boegspriet. Alles gaan vlot en vrolik; almal was opgeruimd omdat ons nou so na-aan die einde van die eerste deel van ons avontuur was.

Kort na sononder, toe al my werk klaar was, gaan ek na my slaapplek se kant toe; maar ek kry skielik lus vir n appel, en hardloop toe op na die dek toe. Die wag staan op die uitkyk, die man aan die roer hou sy oog in die seil, en fluit n vrolike deuntjie; en dit was die enigste geluid behalwe die geklots van die golwe teen die boeg en langs die sye van die skip.

Ek klim toe in die vat, want daar was nog maar net n paar appels oor. Ek sit son rukkie daar in die donker, en deur die geskommel van die skip en die geklots van die water moes ek glo aan slaap geraak het, toe ek skielik wakkerskrik van n geluid asof n swaar man daar digby gaan sit. Die vat skud soos hy sy skouers daar teen aan leun, en ek wou net opspring toe die man begin te praat. Dit was Silver se stem, en, voor hy n halfdosyn woorde gesê het, sou ek vir geen geld in die wêreld voor die dag gekom het nie. Ek lê daar en luister met vrees en



bewing; want uit die paar woorde kon ek besef dat die lewes van al die fatsoenlike mense aan boord van my alleen afhang.

## Chapter 11

What I Heard in the Apple Barrel “NO, not I,” said Silver. “Flint was cap’n; I was quartermaster, along of my timber leg. The same broadside I lost my leg, old Pew lost his deadlights. It was a master surgeon, him that ampytated me—out of college and all—Latin by the bucket, and what not; but he was hanged like a dog, and sun-dried like the rest, at Corso Castle. That was Roberts’ men, that was, and comed of changing names to their ships— ROYAL FORTUNE and so on.

Now, what a ship was christened, so let her stay, I says. So it was with the CASSANDRA, as brought us all safe home from Malabar, after England took the viceroy of the Indies; so it was with the old WALRUS, Flint’s old ship, as I’ve seen amuck with the red blood and fit to sink with gold.”

“Ah!” cried another voice, that of the youngest hand on board, and evidently full of admiration. “He was the flower of the flock, was Flint!”

“Davis was a man too, by all accounts,” said Silver. “I never sailed along of him; first with England, then with Flint, that’s my story; and now here on my own account, in a manner of speaking. I laid by nine hundred safe, from England, and two thousand after Flint. That ain’t bad for a man before the mast—all safe in bank. ‘Tain’t earning now, it’s saving does it, you may lay to that. Where’s all England’s men now? I dunno. Where’s Flint’s? Why, most on ‘em aboard here, and glad to get the duff—been begging before that, some on

‘em. Old Pew, as had lost his sight, and might have thought shame, spends twelve hundred pound in a year, like a lord in Parliament. Where is he now? Well, he’s dead now and under hatches; but for two year before that, shiver my timbers, the man was starving! He begged, and he stole, and he cut throats, and starved at that, by the powers!”

“Well, it ain’t much use, after all,” said the young seaman.

“‘Tain’t much use for fools, you may lay to it—that, nor nothing,” cried Silver. “But now, you look here: you’re young, you are, but you’re as

smart as paint. I see that when I set my eyes on you, and I’ll talk to you like a man.”

You may imagine how I felt when I heard this abominable old rogue addressing another in the very same words of flattery as he had used to myself. I think, if I had been able, that I would have killed him

through the barrel. Meantime, he ran on, little supposing he was overheard. "Here it is about gentlemen of fortune. They lives rough, and they risk swinging, but they eat and drink like fighting-cocks, and when a cruise is done, why, it's hundreds of pounds instead of hundreds of farthings in their pockets. Now, the most goes for rum and a good fling, and to sea again in their shirts. But that's not the course I lay. I puts it all away, some here, some there, and none too much anywheres, by reason of suspicion. I'm fifty, mark you; once back from this cruise, I set up gentleman in earnest. Time enough too, says you. Ah, but I've lived easy in the meantime, never denied myself o' nothing heart desires, and slep' soft and ate dainty all my days but when at sea. And how did I begin? Before the mast, like you!"

"Well," said the other, "but all the other money's gone now, ain't it? You daren't show face in Bristol after this."

"Why, where might you suppose it was?" asked Silver derisively.

"At Bristol, in banks and places," answered his companion.

"It were," said the cook; "it were when we weighed anchor. But my old missis has it all by now. And the Spy-glass is sold, lease and goodwill and rigging; and the old girl's off to meet me. I would tell you where, for I trust you, but it'd make jealousy among the mates."

"And can you trust your missis?" asked the other.

"Gentlemen of fortune," returned the cook, "usually trusts little among themselves, and right they are, you may lay to it. But I have a way with me, I have. When a mate brings a slip on his cable—one as knows me, I mean—it won't be in the same world with old John. There was some that was feared of Pew, and some that was feared of Flint; but Flint his own self was feared of me. Feared he was, and proud. They was the roughest crew afloat, was Flint's; the devil himself would have been feared to go to sea with them. Well now, I tell you, I'm not a boasting man, and you seen yourself how easy I keep company, but when I was quartermaster, LAMBS wasn't the word for Flint's old buccaneers. Ah, you may be sure of yourself in old John's ship."

"Well, I tell you now," replied the lad, "I didn't half a quarter like the job till I had this talk with you, John; but there's my hand on it now."

"And a brave lad you were, and smart too," answered Silver, shaking hands so heartily that all the barrel shook, "and a finer figurehead for a gentleman of fortune I never clapped my eyes on."

By this time I had begun to understand the meaning of their terms. By a "gentleman of fortune"

they plainly meant neither more nor less than a common pirate, and the little scene that I had overheard was the last act in the corruption

of one of the honest hands—perhaps of the last one left aboard. But on this point I was soon to be relieved, for Silver giving a little whistle, a third man strolled up and sat down by the party.

“Dick’s square,” said Silver.

“Oh, I know’d Dick was square,” returned the voice of the coxswain, Israel Hands. “He’s no fool, is Dick.” And he turned his quid and spat. “But look here,” he went on, “here’s what I want to know, Barbecue: how long are we a-going to stand off and on like a blessed bumboat? I’ve had a’most enough o’ Cap’n Smollett; he’s hazed me long enough, by thunder! I want to go into that cabin, I do. I want their pickles and wines, and that.”

“Israel,” said Silver, “your head ain’t much account, nor ever was. But you’re able to hear, I reckon; leastways, your ears is big enough. Now, here’s what I say: you’ll berth forward, and you’ll live hard, and you’ll speak soft, and you’ll keep sober till I give the word; and you may lay to that, my son.”

“Well, I don’t say no, do I?” growled the coxswain. “What I say is, when? That’s what I say.”

“When! By the powers!” cried Silver. “Well now, if you want to know, I’ll tell you when. The last moment I can manage, and that’s when. Here’s a first-rate seaman, Cap’n Smollett, sails the blessed ship for us. Here’s this squire and doctor with a map and such—I don’t know where it is, do I? No more do

you, says you. Well then, I mean this squire and doctor shall find the stuff, and help us to get it aboard, by the powers. Then we’ll see. If I was sure of you all, sons of double Dutchmen, I’d have Cap’n Smollett navigate us

half-way back again before I struck.” “Why, we’re all seamen aboard here, I should think,” said the lad Dick. “We’re all fore-castle hands, you mean,” snapped Silver. “We can

steer a course, but who’s to set one? That’s what all you gentlemen split on, first and last. If I had my way, I’d have Cap’n Smollett work us back into the trades at least; then we’d have no blessed miscalculations and a spoonful of water a day. But I know the sort you are. I’ll finish with

‘em at the island, as soon’s the blunt’s on board, and a pity it is. But you’re never happy till you’re drunk. Split my sides, I’ve a sick heart to sail

with the likes of you!”

“Easy all, Long John,” cried Israel. “Who’s a-crossin’ of you?”

“Why, how many tall ships, think ye, now, have I seen laid aboard? And how many brisk lads drying in the sun at Execution Dock?” cried

Silver. "And all for this same hurry and hurry and hurry. You hear me? I seen a thing or two at sea, I have. If you would on'y lay your course, and a p'int to windward, you would ride in carriages, you would. But not you! I know you. You'll have your mouthful of rum tomorrow, and go hang."

"Everybody knowed you was a kind of a chapling, John; but there's others as could hand and steer as well as you," said Israel. "They liked a bit o' fun, they did. They wasn't so high

and dry, nohow, but took their fling, like jolly companions every one."

"So?" says Silver. "Well, and where are they now? Pew was that sort, and he died a beggar-man. Flint was, and he died of rum at Savannah. Ah, they was a sweet crew, they was! On'y, where are they?"

"But," asked Dick, "when we do lay 'em athwart, what are we to do with 'em, anyhow?"

"There's the man for me!" cried the cook admiringly. "That's what I call

business. Well, what would you think? Put 'em ashore like maroons? That would have been England's way. Or cut 'em down like that much pork? That would have been Flint's, or Billy Bones's."

"Billy was the man for that," said Israel. "'Dead men don't bite,' says he. Well, he's dead now hisself; he knows the long and short on it now; and if ever a rough hand come to port, it was Billy."

"Right you are," said Silver; "rough and ready. But mark you here, I'm an easy man—I'm quite the gentleman, says you; but this time it's serious. Dooty is dooty, mates. I give my vote—death. When I'm in Parlyment and riding in my coach, I don't want none of these sea-lawyers in the cabin a-coming home, unlooked for, like the devil at prayers. Wait is what I say; but when the time comes, why, let her rip!"

"John," cries the coxswain, "you're a man!"

"You'll say so, Israel when you see," said Silver. "Only one thing I claim—

-I claim Trelawney. I'll wring his calf's head off his body with these hands, Dick!" he added, breaking off. "You just jump up, like a sweet lad, and get me an apple, to wet my pipe like."

You may fancy the terror I was in! I should have leaped out and run for it if I had found the strength, but my limbs and heart alike misgave me. I heard Dick begin to rise, and then someone seemingly stopped him, and the voice of Hands exclaimed, "Oh, stow that! Don't you get sucking of that bilge, John. Let's have a go of the rum."

"Dick," said Silver, "I trust you. I've a gauge on the keg, mind. There's

the key; you fill a pannikin and bring it up.”

Terrified as I was, I could not help thinking to myself that this must have been how Mr. Arrow got the strong waters that destroyed him.

Dick was gone but a little while, and during his absence Israel spoke straight on in the cook's ear. It was but a word or two that I could catch, and yet I gathered some important news, for besides other scraps that tended to the same purpose, this whole clause was audible: “Not another man of them'll jine.” Hence there were still faithful men on board.

When Dick returned, one after another of the trio took the pannikin and drank—one “To luck,” another with a “Here's to old Flint,” and Silver himself saying, in a kind of song, “Here's to ourselves, and hold your luff, plenty of prizes and plenty of duff.”

Just then a sort of brightness fell upon me in the barrel, and looking up, I found the moon had risen and was silvering the mizzen-top and shining white on the luff of the fore-sail; and almost at the same time the voice of the lookout shouted, “Land ho!”

# Chapter 11

## Wat ek in die appelvat gehoor het

Nee, nie ek nie, sê Silver. Flint was kaptein; ek was kwartiermeester, as gevolg van my houtbeen. Met dieselfde kanonskoot wat my been afgeskiet het, het ou Pew sy oë verloor. Dit was n eersteklas dokter wat my been afgesit het, goed geleerd, Latyn by die emmervol; maar hy is opgehang saam met al die ander, op Corso Castle, dit was Roberts se manne daardie, en dit kom daarvan om n skip se naam te verander, soos die ,Royal Fortune en ander. Ek sê, as n skip eenmaal gedoop is, laat die naam so bly. So het ons gemaak met die ,Cassandra, wat ons veilig tuis gebring het van Malabar af, nadat Engeland die onderkoning van Indie gevang het; en met die ,Walrus, Flint se ou skip, wat ek rooi van die bloed gesien het, en so swaar gelaai met goudstukke dat dit kon sink.

A! skree n ander stem, dit is die jongste matroos aan boord, en blykbaar vol bewondering, hy was die keur van die bende, die Flint!

Davis was ook n pure man, soos hulle sê, antwoord Silver. Ek het nooit self met hom saam gevaar nie; ek was eers by Engeland, en toe by Flint, dit is my geskiedenis; en nou is ek hier op my eie houtjie. Ek het negehonderd pond opgespaar onder Engeland, en twee-duisend onder Flint. Dit is nie so sleg vir n gewone matroos nie, is dit? Dis alles veilig in die bank. Verdien is dit nie, maar opgespaar is dit, daar kan jy seker van wees, Waar is al Engeland se manskappe nou? Ek weet nie. Waar is Flint sn. Wel, die meeste van hulle is hier aan boord skip, en bly om n stukkie kos te kry, party van hulle moes al rondloop en bedel. Ou Pew, wat hom moes geskaam het omdat hy sy gesig verloor het, het geleef soos n Lord in die Parlement. Waar is hy nou? Dood en begrawe, maar twee jaar voor sy dood het hy byna gesterf van honger. Hy het gebedel, en gesteel, en gemoor, en tog het hy gebrek gely!

Wel, dit lyk nie of dit eintlik betaal nie, sê die jong man.

Dit betaal nie vir dwase nie, daar is jy reg; hulle deug ook vir niks. Maar met jou is dit iets anders, Jy is jonk, maar jys n gawe seun, ek het dit gesien toe ek jou vir die eerstemaal ontmoet het, en ek sal met jou praat soos n man.

Verbeel jou, hoe ek moes gevoel het toe ek die ou rakker vir n ander dieselfde vleierende woorde hoor sê wat hy vir my gesê het! Ek dink, as ek dit kon regkry, het ek hom doodgemaak, dwarsdeur die vat! Maar hy gaan weer aan met praat, en min het hy geweet dat iemand hom

afluister.

Ek sal jou vertel hoe dit gaan met manne van die fortuin. Hulle lewe grof en waag hulle hals, maar hulle eet en drink soos konings, en as son reis agter die rug is, het hulle n stywe beurs. Maar dit word alles weer uitgedrink, en as hulle dan weer see toe gaan het hulle skaars n hemp aan die lyf. Maar dit is nie my gewoonte nie. Ek sit dit alles weg, n bietjie hier, en n bietjie daar, en nie te veel op een plek nie, om agterdog te vermy. Ek is al vyftig, weet jy; as ek met n heel huid van hierdie tog af terugkom, gaan ek regtig soos n heer lewe. Hoog tyd, ne? Maar moenie vergeet nie: ek het my hele lewe lank sag geslaap en lekker geëet, behalwe wanneer ek op see was. En hoe het ek begin? Voor die mas, net soos jy!

Wel, sê die ander, maar al jou opgespaarde geld is nou na die maan. Jy durf jou gesig tog nie weer in Bristol laat sien nie.

Hoe dink jy miskien, waar is my geld? vra Silver spottend.

Natuurlik in die bank, in Bristol.

Dit was, sê die kok; dit was toe ons daar weg is. Maar my ou vrou het dit nou alles by haar. En die Verkyker is verkoop met al wat daarin is; en die ou-nooi is al op pad om my te ontmoet. Ek sou jou vertel waar, want ek vertrou jou; maar die ander word dalk jaloers.

En kan jy dan jou vrou so danig vertrou? vra die ander.

Manne van die fortuin vertrou gewoonlik geen sterweling nie, en hulle is heeltemal reg. Maar ek het n slag om met mense te werk. As daar n kinkel in die kabel kom deur n maat van my, dan word hierdie ou wêreld te klein vir ons altwee. Party mense was bang vir Pew, en party was bang vir Flint; maar Flint self was bang vir my. Bang was hy, en trots op my. Daar kon nooit n roekeloser spul mense bestaan het as die van Flint nie; die duiwel self sou bang gewees het om met hulle mee te gaan op see. Wei, ek kan jou vertel,

en ek wil nie spog nie, en jy sien self hoe n maklike mens ek is om mee klaar te kom; maar toe ek kwartiermeester was, was lammetjies nie die naam vir Flint se ou seeskuimers nie. A, jy kan maar gerus wees as jy met ou John saam op die skip is.

Nou, ek sal jou reguit vertel: ek het eers nie sin |ehad in die ding nie; maar nou hier is my hand! sê die seun.

Jy is n gawe seun, en ook glad nie bang nie, antwoord Silver, en hy skud die ander se hand so hartlik dat die vat wikkkel. Ek het nog nooit n beter figuur gesien vir n man van die fortuin as jy nie, gaan hy voort.

Teen die tyd begin ek die betekenis van hulle uitdrukkings te verstaan. n Man van die fortuin beteken blykbaar niks meer of minder nie as n gewone seerower, en die toneeltjie wat ek afgeluister het, was die laaste bedryf in die verleiding van n goeie matroos. Miskien was hy nog die enigste een aan boord wat getrou gebly het. Maar ek sou

dit gou te wete kom, want Silver fluit saggies, en n derde kom langsaam aangestap, en gaan sit by die ander.

Dick is aan ons kant, sê Silver.

O, ek het dit geweet, sê die stem van Israel Hands, die koksmaat. Hy is nie n dwaas nie. En hy rol sy pruimpie om en spoeg op die dek. Maar, kyk hier, Barbecue: Hoelank gaan ons nog hier rond dwaal soos n moddermeule? Ek is vol tot in die keel van Kaptein Smollett; hy het my al te veel vererg. Dit word tyd dat

ek bietjie gaan kyk waar hulle die wyn en goed bêre daar in die kajuit.

„Israel, sê Silver, jy het nie veel harsings nie, nooit juis veel gehad nie. Maar jy kan tog hoor, sou ek dink; ten minste jou ore is groot genoeg, Nou, luister goed: ek sê, jy bly waar jy is, jy werk hard, jy praat sag, en bly nugter, tot ek die teken gee; en verder basta.

Het ek gesê ek sal dit nie doen nie? brom die koksmaat. Al wat ek wil weet is, wanneer? Dis al.

Wanneer? skree Silver. Wil jy baie graag weet, dan sal ek jou sê. Net so laat as wat moontlik is. Hier is kaptein Smollett, n eersteklas seeman, wat ons veilig daar moet bring. Hier is die Squire en die dokter met n landkaart en sulke goed. Ek weet nie waar hulle dit bêre nie, en jy ook nie. Nou ja, laat die Squire en die dokter vir ons die skat soek, en vir ons help om dit op die skip te laai. Dan sal ons verder sien. As ek van julle almal seker was, sou ek die kaptein se kop aan sy romp laat sit totdat hy ons halfpad terug geneem het.

Maar ons is tog almal seelui, sê Dick.

Jy meen ons is almal gewone matrose, val Silver hom skerp in die rede. Ons kan die koers hou, reg genoeg, maar wie sal die koers bepaal? Daar sal julle almal vassteek. As ek my sin kon he, sou ek Kaptein Smollett vir ons ten minste weer laat terugbring het tot in die passaat-wind; dan sou ons nie vir ons misreken, en dalkies op n lepel water op n dag moet lewe nie. Maar ek ken julle te goed. Daarom sal ek maar met hulle afreken op die eiland, net so gou as ons die goed aan boord het. Dit is jammer, maar julle is nooit gelukkig as julle nie dronk is nie. Bewaar my siel, dit walg my om met sulke skepsels as julle te vaar!

Stadig, stadig, Long John, se Israel. Wie het teëgepraat?

Hoeveel mooi skepe het ek nie al sien sink nie, en hoeveel knap kerele sien swaai aan die galg, en dit net alles deur die vervloekte haas. Glo vir my, ek het al n paar dingetjies belewe. As julle net wil bedaard bly, en nie so gou op hoi gaan nie, sal die koets met die vierspan wel gou-gou voor die deur staan. Maar moenie glo nie! Julle sal julle saligheid verkoop vir n mondjievul rum. Ons weet almal dat jy n halwe dominee is, John; maar daar was ander wat net so goed soos jy kon seil en stuur. Hulle het almal gehou van n grappie, nie so hoog en droog soos jy nie.



So? sê Silver. En waar is hulle nou? Pew was een van daardie soort, en hy het n bedelaar gesterwe. Flint was so, en hy het hom doodgedrink in Savannah. Ja, hulle was n gawe klompie kerele, dis waar! Maar waar is hulle van dag?

Maar, vra Dick, as ons hulle nou eenmaal in hande het, wat gaan ons met hulle aanvang?

Nou praat jy! roep die kok vol bewondering uit. Wel, hoe dink jy? Hulle op die eiland agterlaat? Dit was Engeland se manier. Of keelafsny? Dit was Flint se manier, en Billy Bones sn.

Ja, Billy was die man vir so iets, sê Israel. Dooie mense byt nie, was sy spreekwoord. Wel, hy is nou self dood; nou weet hy daar alles van. O, hy was n ruwe klant, die Billy.

Jy s reg, sê Silver. Maar kyk hier: ek is n dood-goeie mens n jentelman, soos julle sê; maar die slag is dit n ernstige saak. Plig is plig, maats. Ek stem vir doodmaak. As ek eendag in die Parlement sit, of rondry in my koets, sou ek nie graag wil sien dat een van daardie landrotte van die kajuit opdaag nie, onverwags, soos die duiwel by n biduur. Ek sê wag; maar as die tyd daar is, dan moet dit gebeur.

, John, sê die koksmat, jy is pure man!

Wag eers tot jy sien, sê Silver. Maar ek het een versoek: Ek wil self met Trelawney afreken. Ek sal sy kalfskop met hierdie twee hande van sy lyf afskeur. Dick! sê hy opeens, „loop gou, ou seun, en haal vir my n appel, om my keel nat te maak.

Verbeel jou in watter doodsangs ek toe daar sit! Ek wou opspring en hardloop, maar ek had nie die krag nie; my bene was te lam. Ek hoor Dick opstaan, en toe sê Hands: Ag, nee wat. Moenie aan daardie gemors suig nie, John. Gee vir ons liewers n slukkie rum.

Dick, sê Silver. Ek vertrou jou, hoor. Hier is die sleutel. Tap n bekervol uit die vaatjie, en bring dit hier.

Hoewel ek byna van my sinne beroof was van angs het dit nou meteens vir my duidelik geword waar Meneer Arrow die sterkwater wat sy einde veroorsaak het vandaan gekry het.

Solank as Dick weg was, het Israel met die kok suutjies gepraat. Ek kon net so hier en daar n woordjie vang, en tog was dit baie belangrik behalwe hierdie een sin was heeltemal duidelik genoeg om uit te maak: Geen een van die ander wil by ons aansluit nie. Dus was daar tog nog manskappe aan boord wat getrou gebly het.

Toe Dick terugkom, neem een na die ander die beker en drink, een sê net Gesondheid! die ander sê: Ek drink op die nagedagtenis van Flint, en Silver self maak daar n rymple van:

Sukses vir ons plan, en wees maar gerus,  
Daars skatte te vinde na hartelus.

n Helder skynsel val meteens oor die vat; ek kyk op, en sien dat die maan opgekom het. Die silwerstrale skyn bo teen die mas en blink wit

op die voorseil; en byna op dieselfde oomblik roep die man op die  
uitkyk: Land voor die boeg!

# Chapter 12

## Council of War

THERE was a great rush of feet across the deck. I could hear people tumbling up from the cabin and the fore-castle, and slipping in an instant outside my barrel, I dived behind the fore-sail, made a double towards the stern, and came out upon the open deck in time to join Hunter and Dr. Livesey in the rush for the weather bow.

There all hands were already congregated. A belt of fog had lifted almost simultaneously with the appearance of the moon. Away to the southwest of us we saw two low hills, about a couple of miles apart, and rising behind one of them a third and higher hill, whose peak was still buried in the fog. All three seemed sharp and conical in figure.

So much I saw, almost in a dream, for I had not yet recovered from my horrid fear of a minute or two

before. And then I heard the voice of Captain Smollett issuing orders. The HISPANIOLA was laid a couple of points nearer the wind and now sailed a course that would just clear the island on the east.

"And now, men," said the captain, when all was sheeted home, "has any one of you ever seen that land ahead?"

"I have, sir," said Silver. "I've watered there with a trader I was cook in."

"The anchorage is on the south, behind an islet, I fancy?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir; Skeleton Island they calls it. It were a main place for pirates once, and a hand we had on board knowed all their names for it. That hill to the nor'ard they calls the

Fore-mast Hill; there are three hills in a row running south'ard—fore, main, and mizzen, sir. But the main— that's the big un, with the cloud on it—

—they usually calls the Spy-glass, by reason of a lookout they kept when they was in the anchorage cleaning, for it's there they cleaned their ships, sir, asking your pardon."

"I have a chart here," says Captain

Smollett. "See if that's the place." Long John's eyes burned in his head as he took the chart, but by the fresh look of the paper I knew he was doomed to disappointment. This was not the map we found in Billy Bones's chest, but an accurate copy, complete in all things—names and heights and soundings—with the single exception of the red crosses and the written notes. Sharp as must have been his annoyance,

Silver had the strength of mind to hide it.

"Yes, sir," said he, "this is the spot, to be sure, and very prettily drawn out. Who might have done that, I wonder? The pirates were too

ignorant, I reckon. Aye, here it is:

'Capt. Kidd's Anchorage'—just the name my shipmate called it. There's a strong current runs along the south, and then away nor'ard up the west coast. Right you was, sir," says he, "to haul your wind and keep the weather of the island. Leastways, if such was your intention as to enter and careen, and there ain't no better place for that in these waters." "Thank you, my man," says Captain Smollett. "I'll ask you later on to

give us a help. You may go."

I was surprised at the coolness with which John avowed his knowledge of the island, and I own I was half—

frightened when I saw him drawing nearer to myself. He did not know, to be sure, that I had overheard his council from the apple barrel, and yet I had by this time taken such a horror of his cruelty, duplicity, and power that I could scarce conceal a shudder when he laid his hand upon my arm.

"Ah," says he, "this here is a sweet spot, this island— a sweet spot for a lad to get ashore on. You'll bathe, and you'll climb trees, and you'll hunt goats, you will; and you'll get aloft on them hills like a goat yourself. Why, it makes me young again. I was going to forget my timber leg, I was. It's a pleasant thing to be young and have ten toes, and you may lay to that. When you want to go a bit of exploring, you just ask old John, and he'll put up a snack for you to take along."

And clapping me in the friendliest way upon the shoulder, he hobbled off forward and went below.

Captain Smollett, the squire, and Dr. Livesey were talking together on the quarter-deck, and anxious as I was

to tell them my story, I durst not interrupt them openly. While I was still casting about in my thoughts to find some probable excuse, Dr. Livesey called me to his side. He

had left his pipe below, and being a slave to tobacco, had meant that I should fetch it; but as soon as I was near enough to speak and not to be overheard, I broke immediately, "Doctor, let me speak. Get the captain and squire down to the cabin, and then make some pretence to send for me. I have terrible news."

The doctor changed countenance a little, but next moment he was master of himself.

"Thank you, Jim," said he quite loudly, "that was all I wanted to know," as if he had asked me a question.

And with that he turned on his heel and rejoined the other two. They

spoke together for a little, and though none of them started, or raised his voice, or so much as whistled, it was plain enough that Dr. Livesey had communicated my request, for the next thing that I heard was the captain giving an order to Job Anderson, and all hands were piped on deck.

"My lads," said Captain Smollett, "I've a word to say to you. This land that we have sighted is the place we have been sailing for. Mr. Trelawney, being a very open-handed gentleman, as we all know, has just asked me a word or two, and as I was able to tell him that every man on board had done his duty, aloof and aloft, as I never ask to see it done better, why, he and I and the doctor are going below to the cabin to drink YOUR health and luck, and you'll have grog served out for you to drink OUR health and luck. I'll tell you what I think of this: I think it handsome. And if you think as I do, you'll give a good sea-cheer for the gentleman that does it."

The cheer followed—that was a matter of course; but it rang out so full and hearty that I confess I could hardly believe these same men were plotting for our blood.

"One more cheer for Cap'n Smollett," cried Long John when the first had subsided.

And this also was given with a will. On the top of that the three gentlemen went below, and not long after, word was sent forward that Jim Hawkins was wanted in the cabin.

I found them all three seated round the table, a bottle of Spanish wine and some raisins before them, and the doctor smoking away, with his wig on his lap, and that, I knew, was a sign that he was agitated. The stern window was open, for it was a warm night, and you could see the moon shining behind on the ship's wake.

"Now, Hawkins," said the squire, "you have something to say. Speak up."

I did as I was bid, and as short as I could make it, told the whole details of Silver's conversation. Nobody interrupted me till I was done, nor did any one of the three of them make so much as a movement, but they kept their eyes upon my face from first to last.

"Jim," said Dr. Livesey, "take a seat."

And they made me sit down at table beside them, poured me out a glass

of wine, filled my hands with raisins, and all three, one after the other, and each with a bow, drank my good health, and their service to me, for my luck and courage.

"Now, captain," said the squire, "you were right, and I was wrong. I own myself an ass, and I await your orders."

"No more an ass than I, sir," returned the captain. "I never heard of a crew that meant to mutiny but what showed signs before, for any man that had an eye in his head to see the mischief and take steps according. But this crew," he added, "beats me."

"Captain," said the doctor, "with your permission, that's Silver. A very remarkable man."

"He'd look remarkably well from a yard-arm, sir," returned the captain. "But this is talk; this don't lead to anything. I see three or four points, and with Mr. Trelawney's permission, I'll name them."

"You, sir, are the captain. It is for you to speak," says Mr. Trelawney grandly.

"First point," began Mr. Smollett. "We must go on, because we can't turn back. If I gave the word to go about, they would rise at once. Second point, we have time before

us—at least until this treasure's found. Third point, there are faithful hands. Now, sir, it's got to come to blows sooner or later, and what I propose is to take time by the forelock, as the saying is, and come to blows some fine day when they least expect it. We can count, I take it, on your own home servants, Mr. Trelawney?"

"As upon myself," declared the squire.

"Three," reckoned the captain; "ourselves make seven, counting Hawkins here. Now, about the honest hands?"

"Most likely Trelawney's own men,"

said the doctor; "those he had picked up for himself before he lit on Silver."

"Nay," replied the squire. "Hands was one of mine."

"I did think I could have trusted Hands," added the captain. "And to think that they're all

Englishmen!" broke out the squire. "Sir, I could find it in my heart to blow the ship up."

"Well, gentlemen," said the captain, "the best that I can say is not much. We must lay to, if you please, and keep a bright lookout. It's trying on a man, I know. It would be pleasanter to come to blows. But there's no help

for it till we know our men. Lay to, and whistle for a wind, that's my view."

"Jim here," said the doctor, "can help us more than anyone. The men are not shy with him, and Jim is a noticing lad."

"Hawkins, I put prodigious faith in you," added the squire.

I began to feel pretty desperate at this, for I felt altogether helpless; and yet, by an odd train of

circumstances, it was indeed through me that safety came. In the meantime, talk as we pleased, there were only seven out of the twenty-six on whom we knew we could rely; and out of these seven one was a boy, so that the grown men on our side were six to their nineteen.

# Chapter 12

## Krygsraad

In n oomblik was alles op die dek in rep en roer. Ek hoor mense aanstorm van die kajuit en agterskip af. So gou as ek kon, kruip ek uit die vat, en duik weg agter die bak, draai weer om na die agterdek toe, en kom nog net betyds om met Hunter en Dr. Livesey saam na die voorskip toe te hardloop.

Hier was die hele bemanning al bymekaar. Met die opkom van die maan was die lug so te sê oopgetrek. Aan die suidweste sien ons twee lae heuwels, n paar myl van mekaar af, en daaragter nog n derde wat hoër was, met sy kruin nog toe onder die mis. Al drie lyk spits en keëlvormig.

Ek sien dit alles soos in n droom, want ek het nog nie reggekom van die vreeslike angs wat ek deurgestaan het nie. En toe hoor ek die stem van Kaptein Smollett, wat bevele uitdeel. Die Hispaniola seil nou nog skerper teen die wind op, en stuur reg op die oostekant van die eiland af.

En nou, manne, sê die kaptein, toe al die seile ingeneem was, is daar een van julle wat daardie land al voorheen gesien het?

Ja, meneer, ek, sê Silver. Ek het daar water ingeneem met n handelskip waarop ek kok was.

Die ankerplaas is aan die suidekant, agter n eilandjie, nie waar nie? vra die kaptein.

Ja, meneer; hulle noem dit Geraamte-eiland. Vroeër was dit n groot seerowersnes, en n matroos wat ons aan boord gehad het, het al hulle name vir die plekke geken. Daardie heuwel aan die noordekant noem hulle

,Fokkemas-heuwel. Daar is drie heuwels op n ry wat almal skuins afloop na die suidekant, die Fokkeberg, Grootberg en Besaansberg. Maar die grote, die een waar die wolk op lê, noem hulle gewoonlik ,Die Verkyker, omdat hulle daar altyd op die uitkyk gestaan het, solank as hulle skepe in die ankerplaas lê. Want daar het hulle altyd die skepe skoongemaak, met u verlof.

Ek het hier n kaart, sê Kaptein Smollett. Kyk of dit die plek is.

Long John se oë fonkel in sy kop toe hy die kaart vat; maar ek wis sommer dat hy teleurgestel sou wees, want die papier lyk te vars. Dit was nie die kaart wat ons in Billy Bones se kis gekry het nie, maar n nou-keurige kopie daarvan, waarop alles aangegee was, tot die name en syfers, behalwe die rooi kruisies en die aantekeninge wat daarby geskryf was. Hoewel Silver se ergernis baie groot moes gewees het,



had hy die teenwoordigheid van gees om dit nie te laat blyk nie.

Ja, meneer, sê hy, dit is die plek, reg genoeg. En dit is drommels goed geteken ook. Wie sou dit gemaak het, wonder ek? Die seerowers was daarvoor te onkundig. A, hier is dit: „Kaptein Kidd se ankerplaas, net soos my skeepsmaat dit genoem het. Daar loop n sterk stroming langs die suidkus, en verder noordwaarts langs die weskus op. Dit was reg van u, meneer, om die windkant van die eiland te hou, ten minste as u van plan is om daar te anker, en te kalfater. Daar is nie n geskikter plek vir die doel in hierdie waters nie.

Dankie vir jou inligting, sê Kaptein Smollett. As ek later jou hulp nodig het, sal ek vra. Nou kan jy maar gaan.

Ek was verbaas oor die bedaardheid waarmee Long John laat blyk het dat hy die eiland ken; ek moet beken dat ek half bang geword het toe hy na my kant toe kom.

Natuurlik kon hy nie weet dat ek hom afgeluister het nie. Ek het hom nou verafsku ter wille van sy wreedheid, valsheid en slegte invloed, dat ek amper nie kon help om te gril toe hy sy hand op my arm sit nie.

Dit is n pragtige plek daardie, vir n seun soos jy om te gaan rondloop, sê hy. Jy kan baai, en borne klim, en bokke jag, soveel as jy wil; en ek weet jy sal self soos n bok teen daardie koppe uitklim. Dit maak my sommer jonk om net daarna te kyk. Ek het amper my houtbeen vergeet, weet jy. Dit is tog lekker om jong te wees, en tien tonne te besit, nê? As jy lus kry om te gaan kyk, vra net vir ou John, en hy sal vir jou bietjie eetgoed inpak om saam te neem.

Hy klop my op die vriendelikste manier op die skouer, en strompel verder aan, en af die trap na onder.

Kaptein Smollett, Dr. Livesey en die Squire het al die tyd op die dek staan en gesels, en, hoe graag ek ook al my nuus aan hulle wou vertel, kon ek nie waag om openlik na hulle toe te gaan nie. Ek staan nog daar en dink wat ek sou doen, toe Dr. Livesey my roep. Hy het sy pyp in die kajuit vergeet, en wou my daarheen stuur om dit te haal; maar sodra as ek na genoeg kom om saggies te kan praat, bars ek los met die woorde: Dok-ter, ek moet met jou praat. Neem die kaptein en die Squire na die kajuit toe, en laat my dan roep. Ek het n vreeslike tyding.

Die dokter word effens bleker, maar bly uiterlik bedaard.

Dankie,' Jim, sê hy hardop, dis al wat ek wou weet, asof hy my sommer iets gevra het.

Toe draai hy dadelik om en loop na die ander twee toe. Hulle praat n rukkie suutjies met mekaar, en al het geeneen van hulle dit laat merk nie, was dit tog duidelik dat Dr. Livesey hulle vertel het van my versoek; want kort daarna hoor ek die kaptein gee n bevel aan Job Anderson, en die fluitjie blaas vir almal om op dek te kom.

Kêrels, sê Kaptein Smollett, ek wil julle iets vertel. Die land wat julle

daar sien, is die eiland waarheen ons gaan. Meneer Trelawney, wat baie gulhartig is, soos julle weet, het my nou net die een en ander uitgevra, en ek kon hom die versekering gee dat elke man aan boord sy plig gedoen het, so goed as wat n mens dit kan verwag, en daarom gaan hy en ek en die dokter nou na die kajuit toe om julle gesondheid te drink, en julle sal drank kry om ons gesondheid te drink. Ek dink dit is n gawe idee, en as julle net so dink soos ek, gee dan lustig n driemaal ,hoesee! vir die man wat so > goed is.

Natuurlik het die hoesee gevolg; maar dit het so hartlik geklink, dat ek moet sê ek kon nouliks glo dat dit dieselfde manne was wat na ons bloed dors.

Hoesee vir Kaptein Smollett! skree Long John, toe die eerste geluid wegsterf. En dadelik die tweede hoesee ook weer.

Nou gaan die drie here na die kajuit toe, en kort daarna kom n boodskap dat Jim Hawkins soheentoe moet kom.

Hulle het aldrie om die tafel gesit toe ek in kom, met n bottel Spaanse wyn, en n groot tros rosyntjies voor hulle. Die dokter rook dik dampe, met sy pruik op sy knie, en daaraan ook ek sien dat hy opgewonde was. Die agterste venster was oop, want dit was n warm nag, en ek kon die maanlig op die water sien flikker.

Wel, Hawkins, sê die Squire, jy het iets om te vertel. Praat maar.

Ek vertel toe so kort moontlik die hele gesprek wat ek afgeluister het. Niemand sê n woord voor ek klaar was nie, en geen een van die drie verroer hom nie, maar hulle oë bly op my gerig van begin tot end.

Jim, sê Dr. Livesey, gaan sit. En hulle laat my by hulle aan tafel sit, skink vir my n glas wyn in, maak my hande vol rosyntjies, en toe drink een na die ander met n buiging my gesondheid, oor my moed en knap gedrag.

Kyk hier, kaptein, sê die Squire, jy was volkome reg, en ek was verkeerd. Ek erken dat ek n esel is, en ek wag nou op jou bevel.

Nie n groter esel as ek nie, sê die kaptein. Ek het nog nooit belewe dat n bemanning muitery in die sin het en daar niks van laat blyk nie. Maar hierdie spul slaan my dronk.

Kaptein, sê die dokter, met u verlof, dit is Silver se werk. Hy is n merkwaardige man.

Hy sal vir my baie merkwaardiger lyk as hy aan die galg swaai! antwoord die kaptein. Maar dit is net praatjies hierdie; daar kom niks van nie. Met meneer Trelawney se verlof sal ek n paar dinge opnoem wat vir my duidelik is.

U is kaptein. U het reg om te praat, sê die Squire, met waardigheid.

In die eerste plaas dan, ons moet vooruit, want ons kan nie omdraai nie. As ek die bevel sou gee om om te draai, sou hulle dadelik opstandig word. In die tweede plaas, daar is nog tyd, ten minste

totdat ons die skat gekry het, en derdens, daar is nog n paar manskappe aan boord wat getrou is. Nou, meneer, vroeër of later moet die bom bars; en ek wil voorstel dat ons hulle op n goeie dag onverwags aanval. Ons kan tog seker op u eie huisbediendes reken, Meneer Trelawney?

Soos op myself, verklaar die Squire.

Drie, tel die kaptein, en sewe met ons saam, as ek Hawkins saamtel. En nou is daar nog die betroubare matrose?

Seker almal die wat Trelawney self uitgesoek het, voordat hy Silver ontmoet het, sê die dokter.

Nee, sê die Squire, Hands was een van myne.

Ek het werklik gedink dat ek Hands kon vertrou, sê die kaptein.

En om te dink dat hulle almal Engelse is, bars die Squire los, ek het baie lus en blaas die skip op met man en muis.

Wel, here, sê die kaptein, die beste wat ek kan sê is maar baie min. Ons moet maak of ons van niks af weet nie, asseblief, en die ding afwag. Ek weet dit is makliker gesê as gedoen; dit sou baie makliker wees om maar dadelik te baklei. Maar dit durf ons nie waag, voordat ons seker weet hoeveel aan ons kant staan nie. Ons moet maar wag en kyk wat broei, dis al wat ons te doen staan.

Jim kan ons meer help as iemand anders, sê die dokter. Die matrose praat vry uit met hom, en Jim is oplettend.

Hawkins, ek stel die volste vertroue in jou, sê die Squire.

Ek het baie wanhopig gevoel oor die saak, want ek het besef hoe hulpeloos ek was; en tog, deur die wonderlike sameloop van omstandighede, was dit werklik deur my wat die redding gekom het. Ons kon maar reken soos ons wil, maar daar bly maar net sewe uit die ses en twin tig op wie ons kon vertrou; en een van die sewe was nog maar n seun, sodat die kanse ses was teen neëntien.

# PART THREE

## My Shore Adventure

### Chapter 13

How My Shore Adventure Began THE appearance of the island when I came on deck next morning was altogether changed. Although the breeze had now utterly ceased, we

had made a great deal of way during the night and were now lying becalmed about half a mile to the south-east of the low eastern coast.

Grey-coloured woods covered a large part of the surface. This even tint was indeed broken up by streaks of yellow sand-break in the lower lands, and by many tall trees of the pine family, out-topping the others— some singly, some in clumps; but the general colouring was uniform and sad. The hills ran up clear above the vegetation in spires of naked rock. All were strangely shaped, and the Spy-glass, which was by three or four hundred feet the tallest on the island, was likewise the strangest in configuration, running up sheer from almost every side and then suddenly cut off at the top like a pedestal to put a statue on.

The HISPANIOLA was rolling scuppers under in the ocean swell. The booms were tearing at the blocks, the rudder was banging to and fro, and the whole ship creaking, groaning, and jumping like a manufactory. I had to cling tight to

the backstay, and the world turned giddily before my eyes, for though I was a good enough sailor when there was way on, this standing still and being rolled about like a bottle was

a thing I never learned to stand without a qualm or so, above all in the morning, on an empty stomach. Perhaps it was this—perhaps it was

the look of the island, with its grey, melancholy woods, and wild stone spires, and the surf that we could both see and hear foaming and thundering on the steep beach—at least, although the sun shone bright and hot, and the shore birds were fishing and crying all around us, and you would have thought anyone would have been glad to get to land after being so long at sea, my heart sank, as the saying is, into my boots; and from the first look onward, I hated the very thought of Treasure Island.

We had a dreary morning's work before us, for there was no sign of any wind, and the boats had to be got out and manned, and the ship warped three or four miles round the corner of the island and up the narrow

passage to the haven behind Skeleton Island. I volunteered for one of the boats, where I had, of course, no business. The heat was sweltering, and the men grumbled fiercely over their work. Anderson was in command of my boat, and instead of keeping the crew in order, he grumbled as loud as the worst. "Well," he said with an oath, "it's not forever."

I thought this was a very bad sign, for up to that day the men had gone

briskly and willingly about their business; but the very sight of the island had relaxed the cords of discipline.

All the way in, Long John stood by the steersman and conned the ship. He knew the passage like the palm of his hand, and though the man in the chains got everywhere more water than was down in the chart, John never hesitated once.

"There's a strong scour with the ebb," he said, "and this here passage has been dug out, in a manner of speaking, with a spade."

We brought up just where the anchor was in the chart, about a third of a

mile from each shore, the mainland on one side and Skeleton Island on the other. The bottom was clean sand. The plunge of our anchor sent up clouds of birds wheeling and crying over the woods, but in less than a minute they were down again and all was once more silent. The place was entirely land-locked, buried in woods, the trees coming right down to high-water mark, the shores mostly flat, and the hilltops standing round at a distance in a sort of amphitheatre, one here, one there. Two little rivers, or rather two swamps, emptied out into this pond, as you might call it; and the foliage

round that part of the shore had a kind of poisonous brightness. From the ship we could see nothing of the house or stockade, for they were quite buried among trees; and if it had not been for the chart on the companion, we might have been the first that had ever anchored there since the island arose out of the seas. There was not a breath of air moving, nor a sound but that of the surf booming half a mile away along the beaches and against the rocks outside. A peculiar stagnant smell hung over the anchorage—a smell of sodden leaves and rotting tree

trunks. I observed the doctor sniffing and sniffing, like someone tasting a bad egg.

"I don't know about treasure," he said, "but I'll stake my wig there's fever here."

If the conduct of the men had been alarming in the boat, it became truly threatening when they had come aboard. They lay about the deck growling together in talk. The slightest order was received with a

black look and grudgingly and carelessly obeyed. Even the honest hands must have caught the infection, for there was not one man aboard to mend another. Mutiny, it was plain, hung over us like a thunder-cloud.

And it was not only we of the cabin party who perceived the danger. Long John was hard at work going from group to group, spending himself in good advice, and as for example no man could have shown a better. He fairly outstripped himself in willingness and civility; he was all smiles to everyone. If an order were given, John would be on his crutch in an instant, with the cheeriest "Aye, aye, sir!" in the world; and when there was nothing else to do, he kept up one song after another, as if to conceal the discontent of the rest.

Of all the gloomy features of that

gloomy afternoon, this obvious anxiety on the part of Long John appeared the worst.

We held a council in the cabin. "Sir," said the captain, "if I risk another order, the whole ship'll

come about our ears by the run. You see, sir, here it is. I get a rough answer, do I not? Well, if I speak back, pikes will be going in two shakes; if I don't, Silver will see there's something under that, and the game's up. Now, we've only one man to rely on."

"And who is that?" asked the squire. "Silver, sir," returned the captain; "he's as anxious as you and I to

smother things up. This is a tiff; he'd soon talk 'em out of it if he had the chance, and what I propose to do is to give him the chance. Let's allow the men an afternoon ashore. If they all go, why we'll fight the ship. If they none of them go, well then, we hold the cabin, and God defend the right. If some go, you mark my words, sir, Silver'll bring 'em aboard again as mild as lambs."

It was so decided; loaded pistols were served out to all the sure men; Hunter, Joyce, and Redruth were taken into our confidence and received the news with less surprise and a better spirit than we had looked for, and then the captain went on deck and addressed the crew.

"My lads," said he, "we've had a hot day and are all tired and out of sorts. A turn ashore'll hurt nobody— the boats are still in the water; you can take the gigs, and as many as please may go ashore for the afternoon. I'll fire a gun half an hour before sundown."

I believe the silly fellows must have thought they would break their shins over treasure as soon as they were landed, for they all came out of their sulks in a moment and gave a cheer that started the echo in a far-away hill and sent the birds once more flying and squalling round the anchorage.

The captain was too bright to be in the way. He whipped out of sight

in a moment, leaving Silver to arrange the party, and I fancy it was as well he did so. Had he been on deck, he could no longer so much as have pretended not to understand the situation. It was as plain as day. Silver was the captain, and a mighty rebellious crew he had of it. The honest hands—and I was soon to see it proved that there were such on board—must have been very stupid fellows. Or rather, I suppose the truth was this, that all hands were

disaffected by the example of the ringleaders—only some more, some less; and a few, being good fellows in the main, could neither be led nor driven any further. It is one thing to be idle and skulk and quite another to take a ship and murder a number of innocent men.

At last, however, the party was

made up. Six fellows were to stay on board, and the remaining thirteen, including Silver, began to embark. Then it was that there came into my head the first of the mad notions that contributed so much to save our

lives. If six men were left by Silver, it was plain our party could not take

and fight the ship; and since only six were left, it was equally plain that the cabin party had no present need

of my assistance. It occurred to me at once to go ashore. In a jiffy I had slipped over the side and curled up

in the fore-sheets of the nearest boat, and almost at the same moment she shoved off.

No one took notice of me, only the bow oar saying, "Is that you, Jim? Keep your head down." But Silver, from the other boat, looked sharply over and called out to know if that were me; and from that moment I began to regret what I had done. The crews raced for the beach, but the boat I was in, having some start and being at once the lighter and the better manned, shot far ahead of her consort, and the bow had struck among the shore-side trees and I had caught a branch and swung myself out and plunged into the nearest thicket while Silver and the rest were still a hundred yards behind. "Jim, Jim!" I heard him shouting.

But you may suppose I paid no heed; jumping, ducking, and breaking through, I ran straight before my nose till I could run no longer.

DEEL III:

MY AVONTUUR OP DIE EILAND

# Chapter 13

## Hoe ek geland het

Die volgende more toe ek op die dek kom, het die eiland vir my heeltemal anders gelyk. Die wind het gaan le, maar ons het tog n goeie entjie vooruit gegaan ge-durende die nag, en het nou sowat n halfmyl van die kus af stil gele. n Groot deel van die eiland was bedek met grysagtige bosse. Hierdie vaal tint was hier en daar afgewissel deur geel sandbanke, en groot dennebome wat hoog bokant die ander uitsteek; maar oor die algemeen het dit alles baie eentonig en treurig gelyk. Die berge het soos kaal, wit kranse tussen die bosse gestaan. Hulle het almal baie vreemde vorms gehad, en die Verkyker, wat sowat drie of vierhonderd voet bokant die ander uitsteek, was die wonderlikste, want dit loop aan alkante steil op, en bo-op was dit plat, net soos die voetstuk van n standbeeld.

Die Hispaniola rol so rond dat die water by die spui-gate uitloop. Die stringe ruk aan die blokke, die roer klap heen en weer, en die hele skip het gekraak en gesteun soos n groot fabriek. Ek moes styf vasklou aan die sypane, want die hele wêreld draai met my rond. Ek was n taamlike goeie matroos solank as die skip vorentoe gaan, maar hierdie stillê en ronddobber soos n bottel was vir my te veel, veral op n nugter maag.

Miskien was dit om die rede, miskien was dit omdat die eiland so treurig gelyk het met sy grys bosse en hoë kaal kranse, of was dit die geklots van die branders wat ons van die skip af kon hoor, maar een ding is seker, en dit is dat my hart in my skoene gesink het, soos die spreekwoord sê, en dat ek van die eerste oomblik af die grootste teësin in Skateiland gekry het.

Ons het n onaangename taak die oggend gehad, want die wind het gaan le, en nou moes die bote beman en die skip vir drie of vier myl gesleep word, om die hoek van die eiland en deur die nou gang op tot in die hawe van Geraamte-eiland. Ek het ongenooit met een van die bote saamgegaan. Die hitte was vreeslik, en die matrose het gedurig gebrom onder die werk. Anderson, wat stuurman was op my boot, was die ergste van almal.

Wel, sê hy met n vloek, dit sal gelukkig nie altyd duur nie.

Dit was n baie slegte teken, want tot op daardie dag het die matrose hulle werk nog altyd vrolik en gewillig gedoen. Maar nou dat hulle die eiland in die oog gekry het, lyk dit of hulle dadelik losbandig begin te word.



Long John staan al die tyd by die stuurman en wys hom waarlangs hy moet gaan. Hy ken daardie ingang soos die palm van sy hand, en hoewel die man wat moes peil orals meer water gekry het as wat op die kaart aangeteken was, het Silver nie vir n oomblik van sy stuk af geraak nie.

Met laagwater word die sand hier gedurig uit ge-maal, sê hy.

Ons het die skip gesleep tot waar die ankerplaas aan-gemerkt is op die kaart, sowat een-derde van n myl aan weerskante van die strand af, die groot eiland aan die een kant, en Geraamte-eiland aan die ander kant. Onder op die boom kon n mens die skoon sand sien lê. n Menigte voëls het opgevlie en skree-skree die bosse ingevlug, toe ons anker neerplof; maar binne n minuut het hulle weer gaan sit, en was alles weer doodstil.

Die plek was aan alkante ingesluit deur die land, wat dig begroei was met bosse tot aan die waterkant. Die heuwels staan in n sirkel sodat dit die vorm van n amfiteater het, hier een en daar een.

Twee klein riviértjies, of liewers moerasse, loop uit in hierdie dam, soos n mens dit kan noem; en die bome en struikie het hier n giftige blink kleur.

Van die skip af kon ons niks van die blokhuis sien nie, want dit was toe onder die borne.. As ons nie die kaart gehad het nie sou n mens kon dink dat ons die eerste besoekers hier was vandat die eiland bestaan.

Dit was doodstil, daar trek nie n luggie nie; in die verte kon n mens die branders hoor bruis en slaan teen die rotse. Daar was n snaakse reuk in die lug, soos van blare of boomstamme wat vergaan is. Ek merk hoe die dokter die lug opsnuif soos iemand wat n vrot eier ruik.

„Ek weet nie van skatte nie, maar koors is hier, daarvan is ek seker, sê hy.

Die houding van die matrose het in die boot n verandering verraai, maar toe hulle terugkom aan boord, word hulle bepaald koppig. Hulle lê rond op die dek, hier n paar, en daar n paar, en praat brom-brom met mekaar. Die geringste bevel word met n suur gesig aangehoor, en slordig en onwillig uitgevoer. Selfs die wat getrou gebly het onder die manskappe, lyk ook met n ontevrede gees besiel. n Openlike opstand hang soos n donderwolk oor ons kop.

Dit was nie net ons, as vriende van die Squire, wat die gevaar ingesien het nie. Long John het hom afgesloof om van die een groep na die ander te loop en met hulle te gesels. Hy was so gewillig en beleef as n mens kan wees, met n glimlag vir elkeen. As daar n bevel gegee word was Long John dadelik by op sy kruk, met die vrolikste ja, ja, meneer! En as daar niks anders te doen was nie, sing hy die een liedjie na die ander, asof hy die ontevredenheid van die ander spul

wou bedek.

Van al die nare dinge op daardie droewige middag, was Long John se opgeruimdheid seker die aakligste.

Ons het kajuit-raad gehou.

As ek dit waag om nog een bevel te gee, sal die hele boel ons dadelik aanval, sê die kaptein. Sake staan so, Meneer Trelawney, as ek met hulle praat, kry ek n verkeerde antwoord. Sê nou ek bestraf een van hulle, dan is die poppe dadelik aan die dans. Sien ek dit oor die hoof sal Silver agterkom dat ek iets weet, en dan loop alles ook verkeerd. Nee, daar is net een man wat ons kan help.

En wie is dit? vra die Squire.

Silver self. Hy wil net so graag as een van ons hê dat alles rustig moet bly. Hy sal hulle gou die ontevredenheid uit die kop praat as hy net n kans kry. My plan is om hulle almal verlof te gee om vanmiddag aan wal te gaan. Gaan hulle almal, dan kan ons die skip verdedig. Gaan geeneen nie, wel, dan verdedig ons die kajuit, op Gods genade. Gaan net party, dan wek ek, sal Silver hulle so mak soos skapies terugbring.

Daar is toe besluit dat elke betroubare man n gelaaide pistool kry. Ons het met Hunter, Joyce en Redruth openlik gepraat, en hulle was glad nie so verwonder oor die nuus as wat ons verwag het nie. Toe gaan die kaptein weer op dek, en praat met die bemanning.

Kêrels, sê hy, ons het n sware dag agter die rug, en almal is moeg en lusteloos. Dit sal niemand kwaad doen om n bietjie op die eiland te gaan rondstap nie. Die skuite is nog in die water; soveel van julle as wil, kan aan wal gaan. n Halfuur voor sononder sal ek n geweskoot los.

Die verspotte goed het glo gedink hulle sal oor die goudstukke val sodra hulle aan wal stap, want dadelik was almal vrolik, en hulle skree so hard hoesees dat die

voëls weer opnuut opvlieg en ronddraai oor die ankerplaas.

Die kaptein was oulik genoeg om te maak dat hy wegkom. Hy het dit aan Silver oorgelaat om alles vir die uitstappie te reël. Dit was die beste ding wat hy kon doen. Silver was nou kaptein, dit was duidelik, en hy het n klomp losbandige matrose onder hom gehad. Die wat getrou gebly het onder hulle moes glo baie dom gewees het. Of liewers almal was min of meer ontevrede, maar n paar van hulle wou nie een stap verder gaan nie. Dit is een ding om suur en ontevrede te lyk, maar dis glad iets anders om n skip aan te val en onskuldige mense te vermoor.

Eindelik was die geselskap tog klaar om te vertrek. Ses kêrels sou aan boord bly, en die orige dertien, waaronder Silver was, begin in die skuite te klim.

En toe kom daar skielik een van die mal planne in my kop, wat later

ons lewe gered het. As Silver ses man agterlaat, kon ons eie mense nie die skip verdedig nie, dit was duidelik; maar juis omdat daar net ses agtergebly het, was dit ook net so duidelik dat die geselskap in die kajuit nie op die oomblik my hulp nodig had nie. Ek besluit om saam te gaan na die eiland toe. In n oomblik was ek oor die kant van die skip en in die naaste boot afgegly. Ek het skaars gesit of ons trek.

Niemand het notisie van my geneem nie, net die voorste roeier se: Is dit jy, Jim? Buk laer met jou kop.

Silver, wat in die ander boot was, kyk vinnig om, en vra met n kwaai stem of ek daar is. Van daardie oomblik af het ek spyt gehad dat ek saamgegaan het.

Die twee bote jae reisie strand toe; maar die een waar ek in was, was ligter en had beter roeiers, sodat ons gou ver voor was. Net sodra as die skuit vassteek in die bossies aan die kant, het ek n tak gegryp, en uitgespring,

en ek was al diep in die bosse in, toe was Silver en sy mense nog sowat honderd jaart agter.

Jim, Jim! lioor ek hom roep. Maar natuurlik het ek geen antwoord gegee nie. Ek spring, ek duik, en breek deur die takke, en hardloop in voile vaart die land in, tot ek nie n tree verder kon nie.

# Chapter 14

## The First Blow

I WAS so pleased at having given the slip to Long John that I began to enjoy myself and look around me with some interest on the strange land that I was in.

I had crossed a marshy tract full of willows, bulrushes, and odd, outlandish, swampy trees; and I had now come out upon the skirts of an open piece of undulating, sandy country, about a mile long, dotted with a few pines and a great number of contorted trees, not unlike the oak in growth, but pale in the foliage, like willows. On the far side of the

open stood one of the hills, with two quaint, craggy peaks shining vividly

in the sun.

I now felt for the first time the joy of exploration. The isle was uninhabited; my shipmates I had left behind, and nothing lived in front of me but dumb brutes and fowls. I turned hither and thither among the trees. Here and there were flowering plants, unknown to me; here and

there I saw snakes, and one raised his head from a ledge of rock and hissed at me with a noise not unlike the spinning of a top. Little did I suppose that he was a deadly enemy and that the noise was the famous rattle.

Then I came to a long thicket of these

oaklike trees—live, or evergreen, oaks, I heard afterwards they should be called—which grew low along the sand like brambles, the boughs curiously twisted, the foliage compact, like thatch. The thicket stretched down from the top of one

of the sandy knolls, spreading and growing taller as it went, until it reached the margin of the broad, reedy fen, through which the nearest of the little rivers soaked its way into the anchorage. The marsh was steaming in the strong sun, and the outline of the Spy-glass trembled through the haze.

All at once there began to go a sort

of bustle among the bulrushes; a wild duck flew up with a quack, another followed, and soon over the whole surface of the marsh a great cloud of birds hung screaming and circling in the air. I judged at once that some of my shipmates must be drawing near along the borders of the fen. Nor was I deceived, for

soon I heard the very distant and low tones of a human voice, which,

as I continued to give ear, grew steadily louder and nearer.

This put me in a great fear, and I crawled under cover of the nearest live-oak and squatted there, hearkening, as silent as a mouse.

Another voice answered, and then the first voice, which I now recognized to be Silver's, once more took up the story and ran on for a long while in a stream, only now and again interrupted by the other. By the sound they must have been talking earnestly, and almost fiercely; but no distinct word came to my hearing.

At last the speakers seemed to have paused and perhaps to have sat down, for not only did they cease to draw any nearer, but the birds themselves began to grow more quiet and to settle again to their places in the swamp.

And now I began to feel that I was

neglecting my business, that since I had been so foolhardy as to come ashore with these desperadoes, the least I could do was to overhear them at their councils, and that my plain and obvious duty was to draw

as close as I could manage, under the favourable ambush of the crouching trees.

I could tell the direction of the speakers pretty exactly, not only by the sound of their voices but by the behaviour of the few birds that still hung in alarm above the heads of the intruders.

Crawling on all fours, I made steadily but slowly towards them, till at last, raising my head to an aperture among the leaves, I could see clear down into a little green dell beside the marsh, and closely set about with trees, where Long John Silver and another of the crew stood face to face in conversation. The sun beat full upon them. Silver had thrown his hat beside him on the ground, and his great, smooth, blond

face, all shining with heat, was lifted to the other man's in a kind of appeal.

"Mate," he was saying, "it's because I thinks gold dust of you—gold dust, and you may lay to that! If I hadn't took to you like pitch, do you think

I'd have been here a-warning of you? All's up—you can't make nor mend; it's to save your neck that I'm a-speaking, and if one of the wild uns knew it, where'd I be, Tom— now, tell me, where'd I be?"

"Silver," said the other man—and I observed he was not only red in the face, but spoke as hoarse as a crow, and his voice shook too, like a taut rope—"Silver," says he, "you're old, and you're honest, or has the name for it; and you've money too, which

lots of poor sailors hasn't; and you're brave, or I'm mistook. And will you tell me you'll let yourself be led

away with that kind of a mess of

swabs? Not you! As sure as God sees me, I'd sooner lose my hand. If I turn agin my dooty—"

And then all of a sudden he was interrupted by a noise. I had found one of the honest hands—well, here, at that same moment, came news of another. Far away out in the marsh there arose, all of a sudden, a sound like the cry of anger, then another on the back of it; and then one horrid, long-drawn scream. The rocks of the Spy-glass re-echoed it a score of times; the whole troop of marsh-birds rose again, darkening heaven, with a simultaneous whirr; and long after that death yell was still ringing

in my brain, silence had re-established its empire, and only the rustle of the redescending birds and the boom of the distant surges disturbed the languor of the afternoon.

Tom had leaped at the sound, like a horse at the spur, but Silver had not winked an eye. He stood where he was, resting lightly on his crutch, watching his companion like a snake about to spring.

"John!" said the sailor, stretching out his hand.

"Hands off!" cried Silver, leaping back a yard, as it seemed to me, with the speed and security of a trained gymnast.

"Hands off, if you like, John Silver," said the other. "It's a black conscience that can make you feared of me. But in heaven's name, tell me, what was that?"

"That?" returned Silver, smiling away, but warier than ever, his eye a mere pin-point in his big face, but gleaming like a crumb of glass. "That? Oh, I reckon that'll be Alan." And at this point Tom flashed out like a hero.

"Alan!" he cried. "Then rest his soul for a true seaman! And as for you, John Silver, long you've been a mate of mine, but you're mate of mine no

more. If I die like a dog, I'll die in my dooty. You've killed Alan, have you? Kill me too, if you can. But I defies you."

And with that, this brave fellow turned his back directly on the cook and set off walking for the beach. But he was not destined to go far. With a cry John seized the branch of a tree, whipped the crutch out of his armpit, and sent that uncouth missile hurtling through the air. It struck

poor Tom, point foremost, and with stunning violence, right between the shoulders in the middle of his back. His hands flew up, he gave a sort of gasp, and fell.

Whether he were injured much or little, none could ever tell. Like enough, to judge from the sound, his back was broken on the spot. But he had no time given him to recover. Silver, agile as a monkey even

without leg or crutch, was on the top of him next moment and had twice buried his knife up to the hilt in that defenceless body. From my place of ambush, I could hear him pant aloud as he struck the blows. I do not know what it rightly is to faint, but I do know that for the next little while the whole world swam away from before me in a whirling mist; Silver and the birds, and the tall Spy-glass hilltop, going round and round and topsy-turvy before my eyes, and all manner of bells ringing and distant voices shouting in my ear.

When I came again to myself the monster had pulled himself together, his crutch under his arm, his hat upon his head. Just before him Tom lay motionless upon the sward; but the murderer minded him not a whit, cleansing his blood-stained knife the while upon a wisp of grass. Everything else was unchanged, the sun still shining mercilessly on the steaming marsh and the tall pinnacle of the mountain, and I could scarce

persuade myself that murder had been actually done and a human life cruelly cut short a moment since before my eyes.

But now John put his hand into his pocket, brought out a whistle, and blew upon it several modulated blasts that rang far across the heated air. I could not tell, of course, the meaning of the signal, but it instantly awoke my fears. More men would

be coming. I might be discovered. They had already slain two of the honest people; after Tom and Alan, might not I come next?

Instantly I began to extricate myself and crawl back again, with what speed and silence I could manage, to the more open portion of the wood. As I did so, I could hear hails coming and going between the old buccaneer and his comrades, and this sound of danger lent me wings.

As soon as I was clear of the thicket, I ran as I never ran before, scarce minding the direction of my flight, so long as it led me from the murderers; and as I ran, fear grew and grew upon me until it turned into a kind of frenzy.

Indeed, could anyone be more entirely lost than I? When the gun fired, how should I dare to go down to the boats among those fiends, still

smoking from their crime? Would not the first of them who saw me wring my neck like a snipe's? Would not my absence itself be an evidence to them of my alarm, and therefore of my fatal knowledge? It was all over,

I thought. Good-bye to the HISPANIOLA; good-bye to the squire, the doctor, and the captain! There was nothing left for me but death by starvation or death by the hands of the mutineers.

All this while, as I say, I was still running, and without taking any notice, I had drawn near to the foot of the little hill with the two peaks and had got into a part of the island where the live-oaks grew more widely apart and seemed more like forest trees in their bearing and dimensions. Mingled with these were a few scattered pines, some fifty, some nearer seventy, feet high. The air too smelt more freshly than down beside the marsh. And here a fresh alarm brought me to a standstill with a thumping heart.



# Chapter 14

## Die eerste Moord

Ek was so dankbaar om van Long John af weg te kom, dat ek gou op my gemak begin voel het, en ek bly staan om die vreemde wêreld rondom my te beskou. Ek het dwardeur n vlei gehardloop wat begroei was met wilgerbome, riete en snaakse swamagtige struik, en nou kom ek uit op n oop, sanderige stuk grond, omtrent n myl lank, met hier en daar n denneboom, en n menigte ander bome met gedraaide stamme, wat na eikebome lyk. Aan die ander kant van die vlakke staan een van die berge, met twee skerp punte wat flikker in die sonlig.

Vir die eerstemaal geniet ek nou die vreugde van n ontdekker. Die eiland was onbewoon, my skeepsmaats het ek ver agter gelaat, en voor my was niks as wilde diere en voëls nie. Ek stap rond onder die bome, en orals sien ek blomme en plante wat ek nie ken nie; hier en daar sien ek n slang, en een van hulle lig sy kop op van die krans waar hy op lê, en blaas soos n tol wat brom. Min het ek geweet dat dit n ratelslang was, en dodelik giftig.

Ek het toe by n groot bos van die wilde eikebome uitgekom, wat laag op die sand groei soos brame. Die bos loop al langs n sandheuwel af tot by die moeras, waar een van die klein riviertjies deur sukkel na die ankerplaas toe. Die son trek dik dampe uit die moeras op, en die vorm van die Verkyker lyk bewierig deur die wasem.

Skielik hoor ek n geritsel tussen die bossies; n wilde eend vlieg kwaak-kwaak op, nog een, en nog een, totdat daar n menigte voëls bokant die moeras ronddraai en skree. Ek wis toe sommer dat van my maats aan t kom was langs die soom van die moeras.

Kort daarna hoor ek n mens se stem wat al duideliker en naderby klink. Ek was in die grootste angs en kruip toe onder die naaste eikeboom in, waar ek so stil soos n muis gaan sit en luister. Ek hoor n tweede stem antwoord gee, en toe praat die eerste een weer. Dit was Silver se stem, en dit gaan vir my of hy baie ernstig redeneer, maar ek kon nie een woord uitmaak nie.

Eindelik bly hulle stil, blykbaar het hulle gaan sit, want hulle kom nie nader nie, en die voëls word ook rustiger en gaan weer sit tussen die riete.

En nou begin ek my te kwel dat ek dalk my plig versuim; want noudat ek tog so dwaas gewees het om met hierdie vabonde saam land toe te kom, moes ek ten minste probeer om hulle planne uit te vind. Ek besluit om so na aan hulle te kom as ek kan, onder bedekking

van die digte takke.

Ek kon mooi skat waar omtrent die twee moet wees, nie alleen aan die geluid van hulle stemme nie, maar ook aan die gedrag van n paar voëls wat onrustig rondfladder bokant die koppe van die indringers.

Op hande en voete kruip ek stadig maar seker na hulle toe. Eindelik lig ek my kop versigtig op en loer by n oop plek tussen die blare deur, en daar in n holtetjie tussen hoë bome, sien ek Long John staan en praat met een van die ander matrose. Hulle staan in die sonlig.

Silver het sy hoed langs hom op die grond neergegooi, en sy groot, kaalgeskeerde gesig blink van die warmte soos hy daar staan en opkyk in die ander se oë.

Maat, sê hy met n smeekstem, dit is omdat ek so baie van jou dink, glo vir my! As ek jou nie waarlik liefgehad het nie, dink jy dat ek hier sou staan om jou te waarsku? Dis alles kant en klaar, jy kan daar niks aan doen nie. Ek wil jou lewe red, daarom praat ek. As een van die woestaards dit moet weet, Tom, wat sou dan van my word, dink jy?

Silver, sê die ander man met n hees stem, en ek kon sien dat hy rooi in die gesig was, Silver, jy is oud en eerlik, of ten minste, jy word daarvoor gehou; en jy het geld ook, iets wat baie min matrose het. Jy is nie bang nie, dit weet ek. En wil jy my nou vertel dat jy jou sal laat verlei deur die klomp ellendeling? Ek glo dit nie! Die Here weet, ek sou liewers my regterhand verloor. .

Hier word hy skielik in die rede geval. Ek het op een van die getroue matrose afgekom, wel, hier kom nou tyding van n tweede. Ver oor die moeras klink daar n skreeu, soos van iemand wat woedend is, toe nog een, en toe een akelige, langgerekte gil. Die kranse van die Verkyker weergalm dit oor en oor; die hele trop voëls vlie weer op, soos n donker wolk wat trek oor die vlei. Die doodskreet het nog in my ore geklink lank nadat alles weer tot rus gekom het, en net die geruis van vlerke en die gedreun van branders die lomerige middagstilte verbreek.

Tom het orent gesprink soos n perd wat die spoor voel, toe hy daardie skreeu hoor; maar Silver het nie n oog geknip nie. Hy staan nog net so met sy kruk onder die arm, en hy loer na sy maat soos n slang wat wil pik.

John, sê die man, en steek sy hand uit.

Hou jou hande tuis! skree Silver, en spring n hele ent agteruit, so rats as n geoefende stoeier.

Wat makeer jou, John Silver? vra die ander. Dis jou slegte gewete wat jou vir my bangmaak. Maar, om Gods wil, sê vir my wat beteken daardie skreeu?

O, daardie? antwoord Silver, met n spotlaggie, maar meer op sy hoede as ooit, en met sy blink oë so klein soos n speldekop in sy breë gesig. Dit is seker Alan daardie.

Arme Tom val hom woedend in die rede: Alan! sê hy. Mag sy siel rus; hy was n dapper man. Wat jou betref, John Silver, jy was lank my sheepsmaat gewees, maar jy is dit nou nie meer nie. Al sterf ek soos n hond, sal ek op my pos sterf. Julie het Alan vermoor, nê? Maak my ook maar dood as jy kan. Maar ek verag jou.

Met die woorde draai hy sy rug na die kok toe en stap weg in die rigting van die baai. Maar hy sou nie ver kom nie. Met n skreeu gryp John die tak van n boom met een hand vas, en met die ander hand laat hy sy kruk deur die lug vlieg. Met n geweldige slag tref die skerp punt daarvan die arme Tom reg tussen sy skouers. Hy steek sy hande op in die lug, gee n harde snik, en val. Ek dink sy rug was op die plek af, maar hy het in elk geval geen kans gekry om reg te word nie. Silver, wat so rats was soos n aap, selfs sonder been of kruk, was die volgende oomblik op hom, en steek sy mes tweemaal tot by die hef in daardie weerlose liggaam. Waar ek wegkruip onder die takke kon ek hom hoor hyg na sy asem na elke stoot wat hy gee.

Ek weet nie eintlik wat dit is om flou te word nie, maar dit weet ek, dat die hele wêreld toe met my rond-gedraai het; Silver en die voëls, en die hoë berg draai om en om en slaan bolmakiesie voor my oë, en in my ore lui daar allerhande klokke en skreeu daar stemme uit die verte.

Toe ek weer regkom, staan die monster regop, met die kruk onder sy arm, en sy hoed op sy kop. Arme Tom le doodstil voor hom op die gras, maar die moordenaar steur hom glad nie daaraan nie; hy vee bedaard die bloed van sy mes af aan n grasperd. Alles lyk net soos voorheen, die son skyn nog sonder genade neer op die moeras en op die hoë heuweltoppe. Ek kon dit byna nie glo dat hier voor my oë n bloedige einde gemaak was aan die lewe van n mens nie.

Maar John haal nou n fluitjie uit sy sak, en blaas n paar maal daarop, sodat dit ver deur die lug klink. Ek wis natuurlik nie wat dit beteken nie, maar dit het my baie bang gemaak. Daar sou meer van die matrose hierheen kom; hulle sou my raaksien. Hulle het reeds twee van die getroues vermoor; sal dit nie dalk nou my beurt wees nie?

Ek begin dadelik onder die boom uit te kruip, en so stilletjies en gou as moontlik gaan ek op hande en voete na die gedeelte van die bos toe wat meer oop was. Ondertussen hoor ek hoe die ou seerower en sy maats na mekaar roep, en daardie geluide het my vlerke gegee. So gou as ek uit die digte bos was, het ek geloop soos nog nooit in my lewe nie, dit raak my nie waarheen nie, solank as ek maar van die moordenaars af wegkom, en hoe verder ek hardloop, hoe groter word my angs, totdat ek gevoel het asof ek waansinnig wou word.

En waarlik, was ek nie totaal verlore nie? As die geweerskoot val teen sonder, hoe op aarde sou ek teruggaan na die skip toe, saam

met daardie boosdoeners, wat nog die warm bloed van hulle maats aan hulle hande het? Sou die eerste een wat my sien nie my nek omdraai soos n voëltjie sn nie? En as ek wegbly, sou hulle ook dadelik agterkom dat ek van alles weet, en bang is om met hulle saam te gaan. Nee, dit was klaar met my, dit was duidelik. Vaarwel Hispaniola; vaarwel

dokter, en Squire, en kaptein! Daar bly vir my niks oor nie as om die hongerdood te sterf, of vermoor te word deur die muiters.

Al die tyd hardloop ek maar nog, en sonder dit te merk, was ek tot naby die heuwel met die twee spits punte, in n streek waar die eikebome verder uit mekaar uit groei. Hier en daar staan n denneboom, party vyftig, ander meer as sewentig voet hoog.

En hier kom ek skielik op iets af wat my botstil laat staan van skrik.

# Chapter 15

## The Man of the Island

FROM the side of the hill, which was here steep and stony, a spout of gravel was dislodged and fell rattling and bounding through the trees. My eyes turned instinctively in that direction, and I saw a figure leap with great rapidity behind the trunk of a pine. What it was, whether bear or man or monkey, I could in no wise tell. It seemed dark and shaggy; more I knew not. But the terror of this new apparition brought me to a stand.

I was now, it seemed, cut off upon both sides; behind me the murderers, before me this lurking nondescript. And immediately I began to prefer the dangers that I knew to those I knew not. Silver himself appeared less terrible in contrast with this creature of the woods, and I turned

on my heel, and looking sharply behind me over my shoulder, began to retrace my steps in the direction of the boats.

Instantly the figure reappeared, and making a wide circuit, began to head me off. I was tired, at any rate; but had I been as fresh as when I rose, I could see it was in vain for me to contend in speed with such an adversary. From trunk to trunk the creature flitted like a deer, running manlike on two legs, but unlike any man that I had ever seen, stooping almost double as it ran. Yet a man it was, I could no longer be in doubt about that.

I began to recall what I had heard of cannibals. I was within an ace of calling for help. But the mere fact that he was a man, however wild, had somewhat reassured me, and my fear of Silver began to revive in proportion. I stood still, therefore, and cast about for some method of escape; and as I was so thinking, the

recollection of my pistol flashed into my mind. As soon as I remembered I was not defenceless, courage

glowed again in my heart and I set

my face resolutely for this man of the island and walked briskly towards him.

He was concealed by this time

behind another tree trunk; but he

must have been watching me closely, for as soon as I began to move in his direction he reappeared and took a step to meet me. Then he hesitated, drew back, came forward again, and at last, to my wonder and confusion, threw himself on his knees and held out his clasped hands in

supplication.

At that I once more stopped. "Who are you?" I asked.

"Ben Gunn," he answered, and his voice sounded hoarse and awkward, like a rusty lock. "I'm poor Ben Gunn, I am; and I haven't spoke with a Christian these three years."

I could now see that he was a white man like myself and that his features were even pleasing. His skin, wherever it was exposed, was burnt by the sun; even his lips were black, and his fair eyes looked quite startling in so dark a face. Of all the beggar-men that I had seen or fancied, he was the chief for raggedness. He was clothed with tatters of old ship's canvas and old sea-cloth, and this extraordinary patchwork was all held together by a system of the most various and incongruous fastenings, brass

buttons, bits of stick, and loops of tarry gaskin. About his waist he wore an old brass-buckled leather belt, which was the one thing solid in his whole accoutrement.

"Three years!" I cried. "Were you shipwrecked?"

"Nay, mate," said he; "marooned."

I had heard the word, and I knew it stood for a horrible kind of punishment common enough among the buccaneers, in which the offender is put ashore with a little powder and shot and left behind on some desolate and distant island. "Marooned three years ago," he continued, "and lived on goats since then, and berries, and oysters.

Wherever a man is, says I, a man can

do for himself. But, mate, my heart is sore for Christian diet. You mightn't happen to have a piece of cheese about you, now? No? Well, many's the long night I've dreamed of

cheese—toasted, mostly—and woke up again, and here I were."

"If ever I can get aboard again," said I, "you shall have cheese by the stone."

All this time he had been feeling the stuff of my jacket, smoothing my hands, looking at my boots, and generally, in the intervals of his speech, showing a childish pleasure in the presence of a fellow creature. But at my last words he perked up

into a kind of startled slyness.

"If ever you can get aboard again, says you?" he repeated. "Why, now, who's to hinder you?"

"Not you, I know," was my reply. "And right you was," he cried. "Now you—what do you call yourself, mate?"

"Jim," I told him.

"Jim, Jim," says he, quite pleased apparently. "Well, now, Jim, I've lived that rough as you'd be ashamed to hear of. Now, for instance, you wouldn't think I had had a pious mother—to look at me?" he asked. "Why, no, not in particular," I answered.

"Ah, well," said he, "but I had— remarkable pious. And I was a civil, pious boy, and could rattle off my catechism that fast, as you couldn't tell one word from another. And here's what it come to, Jim, and it begun with chuck-farthen on the blessed grave-stones! That's what it begun with, but it went further'n that; and so my mother told me, and predicked the whole, she did, the pious woman! But it were Providence that put me here. I've thought it all out in this here lonely island, and I'm back on piety. You don't catch me tasting rum so much, but just a thimbleful for luck, of

course, the first chance I have. I'm bound I'll be good, and I see the way to. And, Jim"—looking all round him and lowering his voice to a whisper-

-“I'm rich.”

I now felt sure that the poor fellow had gone crazy in his solitude, and I suppose I must have shown the feeling in my face, for he repeated the statement hotly: “Rich! Rich! I

says. And I'll tell you what: I'll make a man of you, Jim. Ah, Jim, you'll bless your stars, you will, you was the first that found me!”

And at this there came suddenly a lowering shadow over his face, and he tightened his grasp upon my hand

and raised a forefinger threateningly before my eyes.

“Now, Jim, you tell me true: that ain't Flint's ship?” he asked.

At this I had a happy inspiration. I began to believe that I had found an ally, and I answered him at once. “It's not Flint's ship, and Flint is dead; but I'll tell you true, as you ask me—there are some of Flint's hands aboard; worse luck for the rest of us.”

“Not a man—with one—leg?” he gasped.

“Silver?” I asked.

“Ah, Silver!” says he. “That were his name.”

“He's the cook, and the ringleader too.”

He was still holding me by the wrist, and at that he give it quite a wring.

“If you was sent by Long John,” he said, “I'm as good as pork, and I know it. But where was you, do you suppose?”

I had made my mind up in a moment, and by way of answer told him the whole story of our voyage and the predicament in which we found ourselves. He heard me with the keenest interest, and when I had done he patted me on the head. “You're a good lad, Jim,” he said; “and you're all in a clove hitch, ain't

you? Well, you just put your trust in Ben Gunn—Ben Gunn's the man to do it. Would you think it likely, now, that your squire would prove a liberal-minded one in case of help— him being in a clove hitch, as you remark?”

I told him the squire was the most liberal of men.

"Aye, but you see," returned Ben Gunn, "I didn't mean giving me a gate to keep, and a suit of livery clothes, and such; that's not my mark, Jim. What I mean is, would he be likely to come down to the toon of, say one thousand pounds out of money that's as good as a man's own already?"

"I am sure he would," said I. "As it was, all hands were to share."  
"AND a passage home?" he added with a look of great shrewdness.

"Why," I cried, "the squire's a gentleman. And besides, if we got rid of the others, we should want you to help work the vessel home."

"Ah," said he, "so you would." And he seemed very much relieved.

"Now, I'll tell you what," he went on. "So much I'll tell you, and no more. I were in Flint's ship when he buried the treasure; he and six along-six strong seamen. They was ashore nigh on a week, and us standing off

and on in the old WALRUS. One

fine day up went the signal, and here come Flint by himself in a little boat, and his head done up in a blue scarf. The sun was getting up, and mortal white he looked about the cutwater. But, there he was, you mind, and the six all dead—dead and buried. How he done it, not a man aboard us

could make out. It was battle, murder, and sudden death, leastways—him against six. Billy Bones was the mate; Long John, he was quartermaster; and they asked him where the treasure was. 'Ah,' says he, 'you can go ashore, if you

like, and stay,' he says; 'but as for the

ship, she'll beat up for more, by thunder!' That's what he said. "Well, I was in another ship three years back, and we sighted this island.

'Boys,' said I, 'here's Flint's treasure; let's land and find it.' The cap'n was displeased at that, but my messmates were all of a mind and landed. Twelve days they looked for it, and every day they had the worse word for me, until one fine morning all hands went aboard. 'As for you, Benjamin Gunn,' says they, 'here's a musket,' they says, 'and a spade, and pick-axe. You can stay here and find Flint's money for yourself,' they says. "Well, Jim, three years have I been

here, and not a bite of Christian diet from that day to this. But now, you look here; look at me. Do I look like a man before the mast? No, says you. Nor I weren't, neither, I says."

And with that he winked and pinched me hard.

"Just you mention them words to your squire, Jim," he went on. "Nor he weren't, neither—that's the words. Three years he were the man of this island, light and dark, fair and rain; and sometimes he would maybe



think upon a prayer (says you), and sometimes he would maybe think of his old mother, so be as she's alive (you'll say); but the most part of Gunn's time (this is what you'll say)-

-the most part of his time was took up with another matter. And then you'll give him a nip, like I do."

And he pinched me again in the most confidential manner.

"Then," he continued, "then you'll up, and you'll say this: Gunn is a good man (you'll say), and he puts a precious sight more confidence—a precious sight, mind that—in a gen'leman born than in these gen'leman of fortune, having been one hisself."

"Well," I said, "I don't understand one word that you've been saying. But that's neither here nor there; for how am I to get on board?"

"Ah," said he, "that's the hitch, for sure. Well, there's my boat, that I made with my two hands. I keep her under the white rock. If the worst come to the worst, we might try that after dark. Hi!" he broke out. "What's that?"

For just then, although the sun had still an hour or two to run, all the echoes of the island awoke and bellowed to the thunder of a cannon. "They have begun to fight!" I cried. "Follow me."

And I began to run towards the anchorage, my terrors all forgotten, while close at my side the marooned man in his goatskins trotted easily and lightly.

"Left, left," says he; "keep to your left hand, mate Jim! Under the trees with you! Theer's where I killed my first goat. They don't come down here now; they're all mastheaded on them mountings for the fear of Benjamin Gunn. Ah! And there's the cetemery"—cemetery, he must have meant. "You see the mounds? I come here and prayed, nows and thens, when I thought maybe a Sunday would be about doo. It weren't quite a chapel, but it seemed more solemn like; and then, says you, Ben Gunn was short-handed—no chapling, nor so much as a Bible and a flag, you says."

So he kept talking as I ran, neither expecting nor receiving any answer. The cannon-shot was followed after a considerable interval by a volley of small arms.

Another pause, and then, not a quarter of a mile in front of me, I beheld the Union Jack flutter in the air above a wood.

# Chapter 15

## Die Eiland-mens

Teen die skuinste van die berg kom n stuk los grond afgerol, en dit val met n gekletter tussen die borne neer. Ek kyk op, en ek sien net hoe n gedaante vinnig agter n denboom inspring. Ek kon nie uitmaak of dit n beer of n mens of n bobbejaan was nie. Dit lyk donker en harig; meer kon ek nie sien nie. Maar die skrik was so groot dat ek nie n voet verder kon versit nie.

Dit lyk vir my of ek nou aan alkante afgesny is; agter my die moordenaars, en voor my hierdie onbekende skepsel wat vir my staan en loer. En meteens was my vrees vir die onbekende gevaar groter as vir die wat ek ken. Selfs Silver lyk vir my nou minder vreeslik as hierdie gedrog van die veld. Ek draai vinnig om en begin terug te loop na die bote toe.

Dadelik verskyn die gedaante weer en hy loop met n groot draai, asof hy my wil voorlê. Ek was doodmoeg, maar al was ek ook heeltemal uitgerus gewees, kon ek sien dat ek dit teen son vyand nie sou kon uithou nie. Hy spring soos n bok van die een boom na die ander, en

hy hardloop op twee bene soos n mens, maar verder lyk hy glad nie na n mens nie, en sy lyf is amper dubbeld gevou as hy loop.

Ek begin te dink aan al die stories wat ek gehoor het van mensvreters, en amper skree ek hardop om hulp. Maar hoe nader ek kom aan Silver, hoe banger word ek. Hierdie skepsel was tog n mens, al was hy ook hoe wild. Ek staan toe stil en maak planne om weg te kom; en toe val dit my by van my pistool, en ek kry sommer weer moed. Sonder om n oomblik te aarsel loop ek reg op die eiland-mens af.

Hy het agter n boomstam weggekrui; maar hy het my seker in die oog gehou, want net toe ek na sy kant toe kom, verskyn hy weer, en tot my stomme verbasing, val hy op sy knieë en steek sy hande smekend na my toe uit.

Ek staan stil en vra: Wie is jy?

Ben Gunn, antwoord hy, en sy stem klink hees en stram, soos n verroeste slot. Ek is arme Ben Gunn, en ek het in drie jaar se tyd met geen christenmens gepraat nie.

Nou kon ek sien dat hy n witmens was net soos ek, en dat daar selfs iets innemends in sy gesig was. Orals waar sy vel te sien was, lyk dit bruin verbrand van die son; tot sy lippe was swart; en sy helderblou oë steek snaaks af by son verskroeiende gesig. Geeneen van die bedelaars

wat ek al ooit gesien het, was so\* verflenter soos hy nie. Ou stukke seildoek en ander ou lappe het aan hom gehang, en dit was aanmekaar vasgeheg op die wonderlikste manier, met koperknope, stokkies, en stukkies piktou. Om sy middel dra hy n ou leerlyfband met kopergespe, en dit was die enigste heel ding aali sy lyf.

Drie jaar, sê ek. Is jou skip gestrand?

Nee, maat, sê hy, hulle het my hier laat staan.

Ek het dikwels gehoor van die aaklige soort straf wat die seerowers gebruik het, naamlik, om die kwaaddoener n bietjie kruut en n geweer te gee, en hom dan af te sit ęrens op n eensame eiland.

Drie jaar gelede het dit gebeur, sê hy, en al die tyd het ek geleef van bokvleis, en bessies en oesters. n Mens kan op enige plek op die wêreld vir jou self sorg, sê ek. Maar, maat, my hart word seer as ek dink aan menskos. Het jy nie dalk n stukkie kaas by jou nie? Regtig nie? Ag, ek het al so baie maal gedroom van kaas, en dan word ek wakker, en hier sit ek maar nog op die eiland.

As ek ooit weer op die skip kom, sê ek, kry jy n hele kaas.

Al die tyd voel hy aan my klere, streel oor my hande, beskou my skoene, en lyk vreeslik gelukkig om weer n mens te sien. Maar toe ek van die skip praat, kyk hy verskrik op.

Wel, wie verhinder jou om weer terug te gaan na die skip toe? vra hy.

Nie jy nie, antwoord ek.

Dis reg, maat, hoe is jou naam tog, sê vir my?

Jim, sê ek.

Jim, Jim, sê hy oor en oor, asof dit vir hom mooi klink. Kyk hier, Jim, ek het son ruwe lewe agter my rug, dat jy jou sou skaam as ek dit vertel. As jy so na my kyk, kan jy nooit glo dat ek n vrome moeder gehad het nie, nê?

Wel, nie eintlik nie, sê ek.

En tog is dit waar, sê Ben Gunn. Sy was baie goed. En ek was n gehoorsame seun, en kon die kategismus so vinnig aframmel, dat jy nie een woord daarvan kon uitmaak nie. En kyk wat het van my geword, Jim, en dit het alles begin met albaster speel op die grafstene! Daar het dit begin, en dit het altyd verder gegaan, net soos my moeder my altyd voorspel het, die vrome siel! Maar dis die Voorsienigheid wat my hier gebring het. Ek het dit alles goed oordink op hierdie eensame eiland, en ek het besluit om weer vroom te word. Jy sal my nooit weer vang dat ek n druppel rum drink nie; net son vingerhoed vol vir die geluk, natuurlik, die eerste kans wat ek kry. Ek weet ek sal vroom wees, want, Jim, hy loer eers orals rond, en fluister toe met n ernstige gesig ek is ryk.

Nou was ek seker daarvan dat die arme man van sy sinne af geraak het deur die lange eensaamheid, en hy het die gedagte seker op my

gesig gelees; want hy herhaal die woorde so ewe vererg:

Ryk, sê ek vir jou, skatryk. En weet jy wat, Jim, ek sal van jou n man maak. Jy sal nog jou sterre dank dat jy die eerste gewees het om by my uit te kom.

En toe trek hy skielik n suur gesig, hy gryp my arm styf vas, en hou sy voorvinger dreigend voor my oë.

Vertel my die waarheid, Jim, sê hy, is dit Flint se skip daardie?

En hier kom ek op die gedagte om hom alles te vertel. Ek kon sien dat hy n bondgenoot sou wees.

Dit is nie Flint se skip nie; Flint is dood, sê ek. Maar ek sal jou die waarheid vertel, nou dat jy my dit vra daar is n paar van Flint se manne aan boord, tot groot nadeel van ons ander.

Tog nie n man met met een been nie? hinkel hy, Silver? vra ek.

Ja, Silver! 1 dit was sy naam.

Hy is die skeepskok, en die belhamel van die spul. Hy hou nog altyd my arm vas, en nou gee hy dit skielik n draai.

As Long John jou gestuur het, sê hy, dan is dit met my gedaan. Maar waar sal jy altemit beland, he? Ek vertel hom toe die hele geskiedenis van ons reis,

en die ellendige toestand waarin ons nou verkeer Hy luister baie aandagtig na my, en toe ek klaar was, sit hy sy hand op my kop.

Jy is n goeie seun, Jim, sc hy, en julle sit almal in die knyp, sê jy? Wel, vertrou maar op Ben Gunn, hoor? Ben Gunn is die man wat julle kan help. Dink jy, Jim, dat jou Squire n bietjie toegeeflik sal wees, in geval ek hom help? Hy is tog nou self in die nood, weet jy! Ek vertel hom dat die Squire die beste man op die wêreld was.

Ja, maar kyk hier, ek meen nie hy moet van my n bediende maak, met n plak blink klere aan nie; dit wil ek nie he nie. Wat ek wil weet is, sal hy vir n man duisend pond of so gee van die geld wat tog al so te sê in julle besit is?

Ja, ek is daar seker van, antwoord ek. Die ooreenkoms was dat almal gelykop sou deel.

En die terugreis? vra hy met n skelm kyk in sy oë. Die Squire is n man van eer, sê ek. En buitendien, as ons ontslae raak van die ander, sal ons jou nodig he om te help om die skip terug te neem.

Ja, dis waar, sê hy, en hy lyk baie gerusgestel. Nou sal ek jou bietjie vertel, sê hy. Ek was op Flint se skip toe hy die skat begrawe het; hy en ses ander, almal sterk matrose. Hulle het omtrent n week op die eiland gebly, terwyl ons op Flint se skip die ou Walrus gewag het. Op n goeie dag word die sein gegee, en Flint kom alleen terug in n skuitjie, met n blou doek om sy kop. Die son het net opgekom, en ons kon sien dat hy doodsbleek was. Maar daar staan hy lewendig voor ons oë, en die ander ses almal dood en begrawe. Hoe hy dit reggekry het, weet geen mens nie. Dit moes n lelike bakleiery gewees het, hy

alleen teen ses. Billy Bones was stuurman, Long John was kwartiermeester; en hulle twee vra vir hom waar die goud gebere is. O, sê hy, julle kan dit gaan soek as julle wil, en daar bly ook, vir my part. Maar die skip gaan meer geld haal, sowaar as ek leef!

Wel, drie jaar later was ek op n ander skip, en ons het by hierdie eiland verbygekom. Maats, sê ek, hier le Flint se skat begrawe; kom ons gaan aan land en soek dit.

Die kaptein was kwaad, maar my maats was nie te hou nie, en ons land. Twaalf dae lank het ons daarna gesoek, en elke dag word hulle meer ontevrede, totdat hulle een oggend almal teruggaan na die skip toe. Wat jou betref, Ben Gunn, hier is n geweer, sê hulle, en n graaf en n pik. Jy kan hier bly en self ou Flint se geld soek.

Wel, Jim, drie jaar lank het ek hier gebly, en in al die tyd het ek nie n mondvul christelike kos geproe nie. Maar kyk hierso; hoe lyk ek vir jou? Lyk ek na n gewone matroos? Jy sê nee. En jy is reg.

En toe hy dit sê knip hy een oog vir my, en knyp my hard in my arm.

Se dit net so vir die Squire, Jim, gaan hy voort, hy was nooit n gewone matroos gewees nie, moet jy sê. Drie jaar lank was hy die enigste mens op hierdie eiland, dag of nag, mooi weer of onweer. En party keer (moet jy sê) kom dit in hom op om te bid, en party keer dink hy aan sy ou moeder, en wonder of sy nog lewe, (dit moet jy sê, Jim), maar die grootste deel van sy tyd was hy aan iets anders besig, (moet jy sê). En dan gee jy hom son knyp, soos ek nou doen. En hier knyp hy my weer op die vertroulikste manier.

En dan, gaan hy voort, dan kom jy tot die punt, en jy sê: Gunn is n goeie man, (sê jy) en hy dink n hele boel meer van n edelman as van hierdie fortuinsoekers, want hy was self voorheen een van hulle. Wel, sê ek, ek verstaan nie n woord van wat jy praat nie. Maar dit kom nou nie daarop aan nie. Die groot vraag is: Hoe kom ek weer op die skip?

Ja, sê hy, daar sit juis die knoop. Wei, daar is my boot, wat ek met my eie twee hande gemaak het. Dit lê daar onder die wit rots. As dit nie anders kan nie, moet ons maar daarmee probeer gaan, so gou as dit donker word. Haai! skree hy opeens, wat is dit?

Dit was nog omtrent n uur of meer voor sononder, en tog val daar n kanonskoot, wat alles op die eiland laat weergalm.

Hulle is al aan die veg! skree ek. Kom!

En ek loop so wat ek kon na die ankerplaas toe. Al my angs was weg, en langs my draf die eiland-man gemaklik en vinnig in sy ligte toings.

Links, links, roep hy, hou links, maat Jim! Bly onder die bome! Kyk, daár het ek my eerste bok geskiet. Hulle kom nou nie meer hier nie;

hulle hou almal daar bo op die berge, so bang is hulle vir Benjamin Gunn. Ja, en daar is die kerkhof. Sien jy die graftes? Ek het nou en dan hier kom bid, as ek dink dat dit miskien Sondag is. Dit was nou nie juis n kerk nie, maar n mens het tog hier meer in die stemming gevoel; en dan, weet jy, Ben Gunn het ook niks; nie eers n bybel of n vlag nie. So hou hy aan met praat, sonder om op n antwoord te wag of dit te kry. n Hele ruk na die kanonskoot val daar n aantal geweerskote.

Ons hardloop nog n entjie, en toe sien ek n paar honderd tree voor my die Union Jack wapper in die lug bokant die bosse uit.

# PART FOUR The Stockade

## Chapter 16

### Narrative Continued by the Doctor: How the Ship Was Abandoned

IT was about half past one—three bells in the sea phrase—that the two boats went ashore from the HISPANIOLA. The captain, the squire, and I were talking matters over in the cabin. Had there been a breath of wind, we should have fallen on the six mutineers who were left aboard with us, slipped our cable, and away to sea. But the wind was wanting; and to complete our helplessness, down came Hunter with the news that Jim Hawkins had slipped into a boat and was gone ashore with the rest.

It never occurred to us to doubt Jim Hawkins, but we were alarmed for his safety. With the men in the temper they were in, it seemed an even chance if we should see the lad again. We ran on deck. The pitch was bubbling in the seams; the nasty stench of the place turned me sick; if ever a man smelt fever and dysentery, it was in that abominable anchorage. The six scoundrels were sitting grumbling under a sail in the

forecastle; ashore we could see the gigs made fast and a man sitting in each, hard by where the river runs in. One of them was whistling “Lillibullero.”

Waiting was a strain, and it was decided that Hunter and I should go ashore with the jolly-boat in quest of information.

The gigs had leaned to their right,

but Hunter and I pulled straight in, in the direction of the stockade upon

the chart. The two who were left guarding their boats seemed in a bustle at our appearance; “Lillibullero” stopped off, and I could see the pair discussing what

they ought to do. Had they gone and told Silver, all might have turned out differently; but they had their orders, I suppose, and decided to sit quietly

where they were and hark back again to “Lillibullero.”

There was a slight bend in the coast, and I steered so as to put it between us; even before we landed we had thus lost sight of the gigs. I jumped out and came as near running as I durst, with a big silk handkerchief under my hat for coolness’ sake and

a brace of pistols ready primed for safety.

I had not gone a hundred yards when

I reached the stockade.

This was how it was: a spring of clear water rose almost at the top of a knoll. Well, on the knoll, and enclosing the spring, they had clapped a stout log-house fit to hold two score of people on a pinch and loopholed for musketry on either side. All round this they had cleared a wide space, and then the thing was completed by a paling six feet high, without door or opening, too strong

to pull down without time and labour and too open to shelter the besiegers. The people in the log-house had

them in every way; they stood quiet in shelter and shot the others like partridges. All they wanted was a

good watch and food; for, short of a complete surprise, they might have held the place against a regiment. What particularly took my fancy was the spring. For though we had a good enough place of it in the cabin of the HISPANIOLA, with plenty of arms and ammunition, and things to eat,

and excellent wines, there had been one thing overlooked—we had no water. I was thinking this over when there came ringing over the island

the cry of a man at the point of death. I was not new to violent death—I have served his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, and got a wound myself at Fontenoy—but I

know my pulse went dot and carry one. “Jim Hawkins is gone,” was my first thought.

It is something to have been an old soldier, but more still to have been a doctor. There is no time to dilly-dally in our work. And so now I made up my mind instantly, and with no time lost returned to the shore and jumped on board the jolly-boat.

By good fortune Hunter pulled a good oar. We made the water fly, and the boat was soon alongside and

I aboard the schooner.

I found them all shaken, as was natural. The squire was sitting down, as white as a sheet, thinking of the harm he had led us to, the good soul! And one of the six forecastle hands was little better.

“There’s a man,” says Captain Smollett, nodding towards him, “new to this work. He came nigh—

hand fainting, doctor, when he heard the cry. Another touch of the rudder and that man would join us.”

I told my plan to the captain, and between us we settled on the details of its accomplishment.

We put old Redruth in the gallery between the cabin and the



forecastle, with three or four loaded muskets and a mattress for protection. Hunter brought the boat round under the

stern-port, and Joyce and I set to work loading her with powder tins, muskets, bags of biscuits, kegs of pork, a cask of cognac, and my invaluable medicine chest.

In the meantime, the squire and the captain stayed on deck, and the latter hailed the coxswain, who was the principal man aboard.

"Mr. Hands," he said, "here are two of us with a brace of pistols each. If any one of you six make a signal of any description, that man's dead." They were a good deal taken aback, and after a little consultation one and all tumbled down the fore

companion, thinking no doubt to take

us on the rear. But when they saw Redruth waiting for them in the sparred galley, they went about ship at once, and a head popped out again on deck.

"Down, dog!" cries the captain. And the head popped back again; and we heard no more, for the time, of these six very faint-hearted seamen.

By this time, tumbling things in as they came, we had the jolly-boat loaded as much as we dared. Joyce and I got out through the stern-port, and we made for shore again as fast as oars could take us.

This second trip fairly aroused the

watchers along shore. "Lillibullero" was dropped again; and just before we lost sight of them behind the little point, one of them whipped ashore and disappeared. I had half a mind to change my plan and destroy their boats, but I feared that Silver and the others might be close at hand, and all might very well be lost by trying for too much.

We had soon touched land in the same place as before and set to provision the block house. All three made the first journey, heavily laden, and tossed our stores over the palisade. Then, leaving Joyce to guard them—one man, to be sure, but

with half a dozen muskets—Hunter and I returned to the jolly-boat and loaded ourselves once more. So we proceeded without pausing to take breath, till the whole cargo was bestowed, when the two servants took up their position in the block house, and I, with all my power, sculled back to the HISPANIOLA. That we should have risked a second boat load seems more daring than it really was. They had the advantage

of numbers, of course, but we had

the advantage of arms. Not one of the men ashore had a musket, and before they could get within range for pistol shooting, we flattered ourselves we

should be able to give a good account of a half-dozen at least. The squire was waiting for me at the stern window, all his faintness gone from him. He caught the painter and made it fast, and we fell to loading the boat for our very lives. Pork, powder, and biscuit was the cargo, with only a musket and a cutlass apiece for the squire and me and Redruth and the captain. The rest of the arms and powder we dropped overboard in two fathoms and a half of water, so that we could see the bright steel shining far below us in the sun, on the clean, sandy bottom. By this time the tide was beginning to ebb, and the ship was swinging round to her anchor. Voices were heard faintly halloaing in the direction of the two gigs; and though this reassured us for Joyce and Hunter, who were well to the eastward, it warned our party to be off.

Redruth retreated from his place in the gallery and dropped into the boat, which we then brought round to the ship's counter, to be handier for Captain Smollett.

"Now, men," said he, "do you hear me?"

There was no answer from the forecastle.

"It's to you, Abraham Gray—it's to you I am speaking."

Still no reply.

"Gray," resumed Mr. Smollett, a little louder, "I am leaving this ship, and I order you to follow your captain. I know you are a good man at bottom, and I dare say not one of the lot of you's as bad as he makes out. I have my watch here in my hand; I give you thirty seconds to join me in."

There was a pause.

"Come, my fine fellow," continued the captain; "don't hang so long in stays. I'm risking my life and the lives of these good gentlemen every second."

There was a sudden scuffle, a sound of blows, and out burst Abraham Gray with a knife cut on the side of the cheek, and came running to the captain like a dog to the whistle. "I'm with you, sir," said he. And the next moment he and the captain had dropped aboard of us, and we had shoved off and given way.

We were clear out of the ship, but not yet ashore in our stockade.

DEEL IV: DIE FORT

# Chapter 16

## Die dokter vertel: Hulle verlaat die skip

Dit was so omtrent halftwee, drie glase, in die skeepstaal toe die twee bote van die Hispaniola af weggaan land toe. Die kaptein, die Squire en ek was besig om raad te hou in die kajuit. As daar n suggie wind gewees het, sou ons die ses muitelinge aangeval het, die kabel losgesny, en die see in gevaar het! Maar dit was doodstil, en om die maat van ons ellende vol te maak, kom Hunter met die boodskap dat Jim Hawkins in een van die bote gespring, en saam gegaan het land toe.

Geen van ons het daaraan gedroom om Jim Hawkins te verdink nie, maar ons was bekommerd oor sy veiligheid. Die matrose was in son stemming, dat dit tien teen een was of ons hom ooit weer sou sien. Ons hardloop uit op dek. Die pik kook in die nate; die nare stank het my laat siek voel. As ek ooit  rens koors en disenterie geruik het, dan was dit in daardie afskuwelike plek.

Die ses vabonde sit op die voordek onder n seil bymekaar; ons kon sien hoe die bote vasgemaak word naby die mond van die rivier. In elke boot bly een man agter. Een van hulle fluit Lillibullero.

Dit was te swaar om te sit en wag; ons besluit toe dat Hunter en ek met die jolboot na die eiland toe sou roei om uit te vind hoe sake staan. Die bote het regs gedraai, maar Hunter en ek roei reguit vorentoe, in die rigting van die fort, soos dit op die kaart aangegee was.

Die twee wagters in die bote skrik lelik toe hulle ons gewaar; die een hou op met fluit, en ek kon sien hulle hou raad wat hulle te doen staan. As hulle toe dadelik na Silver toe gegaan het, wie weet hoe anders alles sou afgeloop het; maar hulle het glo hulle orders ontvang, en bly toe maar stil sit. Die kus maak hier effens n draai, en ek stuur so, dat dit tussen ons en die bote kom. Op die manier was ons gou uit die gesig uit. Ek spring uit, en loop so vinnig as ek dit durf waag, met n groot sysakdoek onder my hoed vir koelte, en in elke hand n gelaaide pistool.

Ek het nie n honderd tree geloop nie, toe kom ek op die fort af. n Straal helder water borrel bo teen n koppie uit, en op die koppie, rondom die fonteintjie, was n blokhuis gebou, met dik mure, aan alkante vol skietgate, en groot genoeg om sowat veertig manskappe te huisves. Daar rondom was n wye ruimte skoongemaak, en dit was omhein met n paalwerk, ses voet hoog, sonder deur of opening, te sterk om sonder tyd en moeite afgebreek te word, en te oop om enige

beskutting te gee aan die wat die plek aanval. Die mense binne in die blokhuis sou daar die beste af wees. Hulle staan lekker onder n skuiling, en skiet die ander soos patryse neer. Al wat hulle nodig sou he, was n goeie wag en kos, dan kon hulle die plek verdedig teen n regiment.

Waar ek dadelik verlief op geraak het, was die fontein. Want al het ons nou n goeie vesting in die kajuit van die Hispaniola gehad, met volop wapens en kos, en heerlike wyn, was daar een ding wat kort gekom het water. Ek staan nog hier oor en dink, toe ek skielik n aaklige skreeu hoor, soos van iemand wat vermoor word. Ek was nie ongewoon aan moord en doodslag nie,

ek het onder die Hertog van Cumberland gedien, en was self by Fontenay gewond. Maar ek voel nou of my hart n slaggie gaan staan. Jim Hawkins is dood, dink ek.

Dit beteken veel as n man soldaat gewees het, maar om dokter te wees beteken meer. n Dokter se werk verdra geen draaiery nie. Dus het ek nou gou-gou n besluit geneem, en hardloop dadelik terug na die jolboot toe. Gelukkig kon Hunter goed roei, en ons het die water laat vlieg, sodat die boot baie gou langsaan die skoener le. Ek kry hulle almal verskrik en verslae in die kajuit. Die Squire sit daar so wit soos n doek, en verwyt homself vir al die kwaad wat hy oor ons almal gebring het,

die goeie siel! Een van die ses matrose aan die voor-stewe sien daar nie veel beter uit nie.

Daardie man is n nuweling in hierdie soort duiwels-werk, se Kaptein Smollett, en hy knik na sy kant toe. Hy het byna flou geword toe hy die noodkreet hoor. Daar skeel baie min aan, dokter, of daardie man sluit by ons aan.

Ek vertel die kaptein my plan, en ons besluit onder mekaar hoe om dit uit te voer.

Redruth word toe in die gang gesit, tussen die kajuit en die bak, met drie of vier gelaaide geweeers en n matras vir n skans. Hunter bring die boot om na die agterkant toe, en Joyce en ek begin dit vol te laai met kruit, geweeers, sakke beskuit, vaatjies vol varkvleis, n vaatjie konjak en my onmisbare medisynekis.

Ondertussen het die Squire en die kaptein op die dek gebly, en die kaptein roep na die bootsman, wat die vernaamste man onder die matrose was. Mnr. Hands, se hy, hier is ons twee, elkeen met twee gelaaide pistole. E)ie man onder julle ses wat n vinger verroer, is dood.

Hulle het baie verslae gelyk; maar, na n bietjie gesels onder mekaar, storm hulle langs die kapluik af na onder toe, seker met die plan om ons van agter aan te val. Maar toe hulle sien dat Redruth vir hulle wag in die

versperde gang, draai hulle dadelik om, en n kop steek uit op die dek.

Die kop verdwyn weer skielik, en vereers hoor ons toe verder niks meer van die ses lafhartige matrose nie. Teen die tyd was die jolboot so vol gelaai as wat ons kon waag. Ons moes sommer die goed ingooi, sonder om dit reg te pak. Joyce en ek kruip deur die agterpoort en roei weer land toe so vinnig as ons kon.

Nou was die twee wagers aan die strand darem helder wakker geskrik. Die gefluit hou op, en net toe ons die hoek van die hawe omgaan, spring een van hulle uit en verdwyn tussen die bosse in. Ek het amper weer omgedraai, om die bote eers te verniel, maar ek was bang dat Silver en die ander dalk in die nabyheid was, en dat ons, deur te veel te waag, alles sou verloor.

Ons was gou op dieselfde plek waar ons voorheen geland het en begin toe ons goed na die blokhuis toe te dra. Ons aldrie het die eerste keer, swaar belaaie met eetware, na die blokhuis gegaan en ons vragte oor die heining gegooi. Toe laat ons Joyce agter om dit te bewaak, een man, maar darem met n half dosyn gewere. Hunter en ek gaan weer terug na die boot om n nuwe vraag te haal. So hou ons aan, sonder om asem te skep tussenin, totdat die hele bootvraag veilig gebere was. Die twee bediendes bly agter in die blokhuis, en ek roei met alle mag terug na die Hispaniola.

Dat ons gewaag het om n tweede bootvraag aan wal te bring lyk n groter kordaatstuk as wat dit werklik was. Hulle was meer as ons, dis waar, maar ons het al die wapens gehad. Nie een van die mans op die eiland het n geweer nie, en voordat hulle na genoeg sou kom vir n pistoolskoot, kon ons ten minste n half dosyn onskadelik maak.

Die Squire staan vir my en wag by die agterpoort; al sy naarheid was weg. Hy gryp die vanglyn, maak dit

vas, en ons begin uit lewe en mag die boot te laai. Varkvleis, kruit en beskuit was al wat ons oplaai, behalwe vier gewere en vier sabels, vir die Squire en my en Redruth en die kaptein elk een. Die res van die kruit en wapens gooi ons oorboord in twee en n half vadmans water, sodat ons die blink staal ver onder ons kon sien lê op die skoon sand.

Die gety val nou, en die eb laat die skip omswaai na die anker se kant toe. In die rigting van die twee sloepe kon ons n flou geroep verneem. Daaruit wis ons dat Joyce en Hunter nie in gevaar verkeer nie, want hulle was meer ooswaarts, maar dit was ook vir ons n waarskuwing om gou te maak.

Redruth verlaat sy pos in die gang, en spring in die skuit af, wat ons toe ombring na die ander kant van die skip vir Kaptein Smollett.

Hoor julle my daar onder? skree die kaptein.

Daar kom geen stuk antwoord nie.

Ek praat met jou, Abraham Gray, se hy weer.

Nog geen antwoord nie.

Gray, sê die kaptein, nog harder, ek gaan die skip verlaat, en ek beveel jou om jou kaptein te volg. Ek weet jou hart is goed, en ek glo nie dat een van julle so sleg is as wat hy lyk nie. Ek staan met my oorlosie in die hand; en ek gee jou dertig sekondes om te besluit.

Stilte.

Kom, sê die kaptein, moenie so lank draai nie, my liewe kereel, met elke sekonde stel ek my eie lewe en die lewes van hierdie vriende van my in gevaar.

Daar was skielik n rumoer van voete wat skuif, en vuisslae wat val, en toe storm Abraham Gray, met n messteek in die wang, op die kaptein af, soos n hond wat na sy baas toe hardloop.

Ek gaan saam, kaptein, sê hy.

n Oomblik daarna sit die twee by ons in die boot, en was ons nog n maal op pad na die land toe.

Ja, ons was nou wel van die skip af, maar nog lank nie veilig in die blokhuis nie.

# Chapter 17

## Narrative Continued by the Doctor: The Jolly-boat's Last Trip

THIS fifth trip was quite different from any of the others. In the first place, the little gallipot of a boat that we were in was gravely overloaded. Five grown men, and three of them— Trelawney, Redruth, and the captain-

-over six feet high, was already more than she was meant to carry. Add to that the powder, pork, and bread-bags. The gunwale was lipping astern. Several times we shipped a little water, and my breeches and the tails of my coat were all soaking wet before we had gone a hundred yards.

The captain made us trim the boat, and we got her to lie a little more evenly. All the same, we were afraid to breathe.

In the second place, the ebb was now making—a strong rippling current running westward through the basin, and then south'ard and seaward down the straits by which we had entered in the morning. Even the ripples were a danger to our overloaded craft, but the worst of it was that we were swept out of our true course and away from our proper landing-place behind the point. If we let the current have its way we should come ashore beside the gigs, where the pirates might appear at any moment.

"I cannot keep her head for the stockade, sir," said I to the captain. I was steering, while he and Redruth, two fresh men, were at the oars.

"The tide keeps washing her down. Could you pull a little stronger?"

"Not without swamping the boat," said he. "You must bear up, sir, if you please—bear up until you see you're gaining."

I tried and found by experiment that the tide kept sweeping us westward until I had laid her head due east, or just about right angles to the way we ought to go.

"We'll never get ashore at this rate," said I.

"If it's the only course that we can lie, sir, we must even lie it," returned the captain. "We must keep upstream. You see, sir," he went on, "if once we dropped to leeward of the landing-place, it's hard to say

where we should get ashore, besides the chance of being boarded by the gigs; whereas, the way we go the current must slacken, and then we

can dodge back along the shore." "The current's less a'ready, sir," said

the man Gray, who was sitting in the fore-sheets; "you can ease her off a bit."

"Thank you, my man," said I, quite as if nothing had happened, for we had

all quietly made up our minds to treat him like one of ourselves. Suddenly the captain spoke up again, and I thought his voice was a little changed.

"The gun!" said he.

"I have thought of that," said I, for I made sure he was thinking of a bombardment of the fort. "They could never get the gun ashore, and if they did, they could never haul it through the woods."

"Look astern, doctor," replied the captain.

We had entirely forgotten the long nine; and there, to our horror, were the five rogues busy about her,

getting off her jacket, as they called the stout tarpaulin cover under which she sailed. Not only that, but it flashed into my mind at the same moment that the round-shot and the powder for the gun had been left behind, and a stroke with an axe would put it all into the possession

of the evil ones abroad.

"Israel was Flint's gunner," said

Gray hoarsely.

At any risk, we put the boat's head direct for the landing-place. By this time we had got so far out of the run of the current that we kept steerage way even at our necessarily gentle rate of rowing, and I could keep her

steady for the goal. But the worst of it was that with the course I now held we turned our broadside instead of our stern to the HISPANIOLA and offered a target like a barn door.

I could hear as well as see that brandy-faced rascal Israel Hands plumping down a round-shot on the deck.

"Who's the best shot?" asked the captain.

"Mr. Trelawney, out and away," said I.

"Mr. Trelawney, will you please pick me off one of these men, sir? Hands, if possible," said the captain.

Trelawney was as cool as steel. He looked to the priming of his gun.

"Now," cried the captain, "easy with that gun, sir, or you'll swamp the boat. All hands stand by to trim her when he aims."

The squire raised his gun, the rowing ceased, and we leaned over to the other side to keep the balance, and

all was so nicely contrived that we did not ship a drop.

They had the gun, by this time, slewed round upon the swivel, and Hands, who was at the muzzle with the rammer, was in consequence the most exposed. However, we had no luck, for just as Trelawney



fired,

down he stooped, the ball whistled over him, and it was one of the other four who fell.

The cry he gave was echoed not only by his companions on board but by a great number of voices from the shore, and looking in that direction I saw the other pirates trooping out from among the trees and tumbling into their places in the boats.

"Here come the gigs, sir," said I. "Give way, then," cried the captain. "We mustn't mind if we swamp her now. If we can't get ashore, all's up." "Only one of the gigs is being manned, sir," I added; "the crew of the other most likely going round by shore to cut us off."

"They'll have a hot run, sir," returned the captain. "Jack ashore, you know. It's not them I mind; it's the round-shot. Carpet bowls! My lady's maid couldn't miss. Tell us, squire, when you see the match, and we'll hold water."

In the meanwhile we had been making headway at a good pace for a boat so overloaded, and we had shipped but little water in the process. We were now close in; thirty or forty strokes and we should beach her, for the ebb had already disclosed a narrow belt of sand below the clustering trees. The gig

was no longer to be feared; the little point had already concealed it from our eyes. The ebb-tide, which had so cruelly delayed us, was now making reparation and delaying our assailants. The one source of danger was the gun.

"If I durst," said the captain, "I'd stop and pick off another man."

But it was plain that they meant nothing should delay their shot. They had never so much as looked at their fallen comrade, though he was not dead, and I could see him trying to crawl away.

"Ready!" cried the squire.

"Hold!" cried the captain, quick as an echo.

And he and Redruth backed with a great heave that sent her stern bodily under water. The report fell in at the same instant of time. This was the first that Jim heard, the sound of the squire's shot not having reached him. Where the ball passed, not one of us precisely knew, but I fancy it must have been over our heads and that the wind of it may have contributed to our disaster.

At any rate, the boat sank by the stern, quite gently, in three feet of water, leaving the captain and myself, facing each other, on our feet. The other three took complete

headers, and came up again drenched and bubbling.

So far there was no great harm. No lives were lost, and we could wade ashore in safety. But there were all our stores at the bottom, and to

make things worse, only two guns out of five remained in a state for service. Mine I had snatched from my knees and held over my head, by a sort of instinct. As for the captain, he had carried his over his shoulder by a bandoleer, and like a wise man, lock uppermost. The other three had gone down with the boat.

To add to our concern, we heard voices already drawing near us in the woods along shore, and we had not only the danger of being cut off from the stockade in our half-crippled state but the fear before us whether, if Hunter and Joyce were attacked by half a dozen, they would have the sense and conduct to stand firm. Hunter was steady, that we knew; Joyce was a doubtful case—a pleasant, polite man for a valet and to brush one's clothes, but not entirely fitted for a man of war.

With all this in our minds, we waded ashore as fast as we could, leaving behind us the poor jolly-boat and a good half of all our powder and provisions.

# Chapter 17

## Die dokter vertel: Die laaste tog van die jolboot

Die vyfde tog was heeltemal anders as die vorige. Vereers was die ou okkerneutdoppie, waar ons in sit, swaar oorlaai. Vyf groot mans, en drie daarvan, Trelawney, Redruth, en die kaptein, almal oor die ses voet lank, was alreeds meer as wat dit veilig kon dra. En boonop was daar nou nog die kruit, die vleis en die sakke vol brood. Elke slag het ons so n bietjie water geskep, en voor ons honderd jaarts van die skip af was, was my manel se pante kletsnat.

Die kaptein het ons n bietjie verplaas, sodat die boot effens gelyker kon lê. Maar tog was ons byna te bang om asem te haal. Hierby kom toe nog, dat dit nou begin te eb, n sterk stroming trek weswaarts deur die seestraat, en dan suidwaarts die see in, deur die poort waar ons die more ingekom het. Selfs die gekabbel van die water was gevaarlik vir ons oorlaaide ou vaartuigie; maar die ergste was, dat ons uit die regte koers uit dryf, en al verder weg van ons landingsplek af. As dit so moes aanhou, sou ons vlak by die sloepe te lande kom, waar die seerowers enige oomblik mag opdaag.

„Ek kan nie reg op die fort af stuur nie, sê ek vir die kaptein. Ek sit aan die roer, terwyl hy en Redruth roei. Die stroom dryf ons af. Kan u nie n bietjie harder trek nie?

Nie sonder om die boot te laat kantel nie, sê hy. U moet opdruk, dokter, totdat u merk dat ons vorder.

Ek probeer nou alle maniere, en vind uit dat die stroom ons na die Weste druk, totdat die boot se neus na die Ooste wys, n reghoek dus met die koers wat ons eintlik wou gaan.

Op die manier sal ons nooit aan land kom nie, sê ek. Ons kan niks anders doen as stroom-op hou nie, sê die kaptein. As ons eers begin af te sak, is dit moeilik om te sê waar ons sal beland. Die stroom sal wel lang-samerhand swakker word, en dan kan ons weer langs die strand af terugswaai.

Skielik roep die kaptein uit: Die kanon! En ek verbeel my dat sy stem so effens gebeef het.

Daar het ek ook al aan gedink, sê ek, want ek was seker dat hy vrees vir n bombardering van die fort. Hulle kan daardie swaar ding nooit aan wal kry nie. en al kon hulle, dan sou dit tog bly vassit in die bosse.

Kyk agter jou, dokter, val die kaptein my in die rede. Ons het die negeponder skoon vergeet en daar sien ek nou, tot my skrik, hoe die vyf skelms besig was om sy baadjie uit te trek, (soos hulle die

oortreksel van seildoek noem, waarmee die kanon toegemaak was). Dit val my ook nou by dat ons die koeëls en kruit vir die kanon agtergelaat het, en dat dit vir die vabonde net een kap met die byl sou kos om dit in hande te kry.

Israel was Flint se kanonnier, se Gray met n hees stem. Ons stuur nou maar reg op die landingsplek af. Ons was nou sover uit die stroom uit, dat ek weer kon stuur. Maar die ellendigste van alles was, dat ons nou met ons sykant na die Hispaniola toe lê, so maklik om te raak as n waenhuis se seur.

Ek kon sien en hoor hoe Israel Hands, met sy brandewyn-neus, n kanonkoeël neergooi op die dek.

Wie is die beste skutter hier? vra die kaptein.

Mnr. Trelawney, sê ek.

Wil u so goed wees om een van daardie kërcls om te piets? Hands, as dit moontlik is, meneer, sê die kaptein.

Trelawney was doodbedaard. Hy neem sy geweer, en bekyk die pan.

Pas op, skree die kaptein. Versigtig met daardie geweer, anders kantel die skuit. Wees almal klaar om die balans te hou as hy korrel vat.

Die squire lê aan, almal hou op met roei, en ons hang oor na die ander kant toe, om die ewewig te bewaar. Alles het so netjies gegaan, dat ons nie een druppel water geskep het nie.

Teen die tyd was die kanon reg gestel, en Hands, wat voor by die bek staan met die laaistok, was natuurlik die meeste blootgestel. Maar die geluk was ons teë, want net toe Trelawney skiet, buk hy, en die koeël vlieg oor sy kop, en raak een van die ander vier.

Die skreeu wat hy gee, word herhaal, nie alleen deur sy maats aan boord nie, maar ook deur n groot aantal stemme wat van die land se kant af kom. Ek kyk die kant toe, en sien die ander seerowers tussen die bosse uitkom, en na die bote toe hardloop.

Daar kom die sloepe, kaptein, se ek.

Vooruit dan! beveel die kaptein. Of ons nou water skep of nie, ons moet land toe, of dis klaar met ons. Net een van die bote kom aan, sê ek weer. Die ander mans gaan seker langs die strand af, om ons voor te keer.

Dit sal maar swaar gaan, sê die kaptein. Janmaat op land, weet jy! Ek is nie bang vir hulle nie, maar wel vir die kanon. Dis kinderspeletjies om ons te raak. n Ou meid sou nie mis nie. Sê vir ons, Squire, as u die vuur-houtjie sien vlam, sodat ons kan plat le.

Ondertussen het ons goed gevorder, as n mens in aanmerking neem dat die boot so swaar gelaai was. Ons het ook maar min water ingekry. Ons was nou na aan die kant; nog n dertig of veertig trekke met die roeispaan, en ons sou daar wees.

Vir die sloep met die seerowers hoef ons nou nie meer te vrees nie, want ons was alreeds om die draai, en kon hulle nie eers meer sien nie. Die stroom, wat ons so wreed opgehou het, maak dit nou weer moeilik vir ons vyande. Die enigste gevaar was die kanon. As ek dit durf waag, sê die kaptein, sou ek stilhou, en nog een van hulle platskiet.

Maar dit was duidelik dat hulle klaar was om op ons los te brand. Hulle kyk nie eers om na hulle gewonde maat nie. Hy was nie dood nie, want ek kon sien hoe hy probeer om aan te kruip oor die dek.

Daar s hy! skreeu die squire.

Halt! skree die kaptein, so vinnig soos n eggo. Hy en Redruth kom so skielik agteroor, dat die agterkant van die boot heeltemal onder die water induik. Op dieselfde oomblik gaan die skoot af. Dit was die eerste wat Jim gehoor het, want die geluid van die squire se skoot het hom nie bereik nie.

Net waar die koeël heen is, kon niemand met sekerheid sê nie maar ek dink dit was dwars oor ons koppe, en dat die wind daarvan gehelp het om ons ondergang te bewerkstellig.

In elk geval, die agterstewe sink so stadig maar seker af in drie voet water. Die kaptein en ek bly op ons voete staan, regoor mekaar, maar die ander drie het kop onder gegaan, sodat hulle papnat en blaas-blaas weer opduik.

Totnogtoe was almal dus behoue gebly, en ons kon veilig deur stap na die strand toe. Maar daar le al ons kos op die boom van die see, en, wat die ergste van alles was, net twee van die vyf gewere was nog bruikbaar. Myne het ek as deur n ingewing van my knieë af gegryp en bokant my kop gehou. Die kaptein het syne oor sy skouer aan n bandolier gedra, en, soos n verstandige man, met die slot na boontoe. Die ander drie het met die boot saam gesink.

Tot ons grootste onsteltenis hoor ons nou digby, deur die bosse, stemme wat al nader en nader kom. Ons was dus nie slegs in gevaar om voorgekeer te word voor ons die blokhuis bereik nie, maar die vraag was ook, of Hunter en Joyce, as hulle aangeval word deur n halfdosyn, die moed sou he om pal te staan. Op Hunter kon ons reken; maar van Joyce was ons nie so seker nie. Hy was n opgeruimde, beleefde bediende, en uiters geskik om n mens se klere af te borsel, en so meer, maar nie eintlik n krygsman nie.

Met dit alles in die gedagte, loop ons so vinnig as wat ons kon na die strand toe. Agter ons lê die arme jolboot, met meer as die helfte van ons kruit en eetware daarin.

## Chapter 18

Narrative Continued by the Doctor: End of the First Day's Fighting  
WE made our best speed across the strip of wood that now divided us

from the stockade, and at every step we took the voices of the buccaneers rang nearer. Soon we could hear their footfalls as they ran and the cracking of the branches as they breasted across a bit of thicket.

I began to see we should have a brush for it in earnest and looked to my priming.

"Captain," said I, "Trelawney is the dead shot. Give him your gun; his own is useless."

They exchanged guns, and Trelawney, silent and cool as he had been since the beginning of the bustle, hung a moment on his heel to see that all was fit for service. At the same time, observing Gray to be unarmed, I handed him my cutlass. It did all our hearts good to see him

spit in his hand, knit his brows, and make the blade sing through the air. It was plain from every line of his body that our new hand was worth his salt.

Forty paces farther we came to the edge of the wood and saw the stockade in front of us. We struck the

enclosure about the middle of the south side, and almost at the same time, seven mutineers—Job Anderson, the boatswain, at their head—appeared in full cry at the southwestern corner.

They paused as if taken aback, and before they recovered, not only the squire and I, but Hunter and Joyce from the block house, had time to fire. The four shots came in rather a scattering volley, but they did the business: one of the enemy actually fell, and the rest, without hesitation, turned and plunged into the trees. After reloading, we walked down the outside of the palisade to see to the fallen enemy. He was stone dead—shot through the heart.

We began to rejoice over our good success when just at that moment a pistol cracked in the bush, a ball whistled close past my ear, and poor Tom Redruth stumbled and fell his length on the ground. Both the squire and I returned the shot, but as we had nothing to aim at, it is probable we only wasted powder. Then we reloaded and turned our attention to poor Tom.

The captain and Gray were already examining him, and I saw with half an eye that all was over.

I believe the readiness of our return

volley had scattered the mutineers once more, for we were suffered without further molestation to get the poor old gamekeeper hoisted over the stockade and carried, groaning and bleeding, into the log-house. Poor old fellow, he had not uttered one word of surprise, complaint, fear, or even acquiescence from the very beginning of our troubles till now, when we had laid him down in the log-house to die. He had lain like a Trojan behind his mattress in

the gallery; he had followed every order silently, doggedly, and well; he was the oldest of our party by a score of years; and now, sullen, old,

serviceable servant, it was he that was to die.

The squire dropped down beside him on his knees and kissed his hand, crying like a child.

"Be I going, doctor?" he asked.

"Tom, my man," said I, "you're going home."

"I wish I had had a lick at them with the gun first," he replied.

"Tom," said the squire, "say you forgive me, won't you?"

"Would that be respectful like, from me to you, squire?" was the answer. "Howsoever, so be it, amen!"

After a little while of silence, he

said he thought somebody might read

a prayer. "It's the custom, sir," he added apologetically. And not long after, without another word, he passed away.

In the meantime the captain, whom I had observed to be wonderfully swollen about the chest and pockets, had turned out a great many various stores—the British colours, a Bible,

a coil of stoutish rope, pen, ink, the log-book, and pounds of tobacco.

He had found a longish fir-tree lying felled and trimmed in the enclosure, and with the help of Hunter he had

set it up at the corner of the log-house where the trunks crossed and made an angle. Then, climbing on the

roof, he had with his own hand bent and run up the colours.

This seemed mightily to relieve him. He re-entered the log-house and set about counting up the stores as if nothing else existed. But he had an eye on Tom's passage for all that,

and as soon as all was over, came forward with another flag and reverently spread it on the body. "Don't you take on, sir," he said, shaking the squire's hand. "All's well with him; no fear for a hand that's been shot down in his duty to captain and owner. It mayn't be good

divinity, but it's a fact." Then he pulled me aside.

"Dr. Livesey," he said, "in how many weeks do you and squire expect the consort?"

I told him it was a question not of weeks but of months, that if we were not back by the end of August Blandly was to send to find us, but neither sooner nor later. "You can calculate for yourself," I said.

"Why, yes," returned the captain, scratching his head; "and making a large allowance, sir, for all the gifts of Providence, I should say we were pretty close hauled."

"How do you mean?" I asked.

"It's a pity, sir, we lost that second load. That's what I mean," replied

the captain. "As for powder and shot, we'll do. But the rations are short, very short— so short, Dr. Livesey, that we're perhaps as well without that extra mouth."

And he pointed to the dead body under the flag.

Just then, with a roar and a whistle, a round-shot passed high above the roof of the log-house and plumped far beyond us in the wood.

"Oho!" said the captain. "Blaze away! You've little enough powder already, my lads."

At the second trial, the aim was better, and the ball descended inside the stockade, scattering a cloud of

sand but doing no further damage. "Captain," said the squire, "the house is quite invisible from the ship. It must be the flag they are aiming at. Would it not be wiser to take it in?"

"Strike my colours!" cried the captain. "No, sir, not I"; and as soon as he had said the words, I think we all agreed with him. For it was not only a piece of stout, seamanly, good feeling; it was good policy besides and showed our enemies that we despised their cannonade.

All through the evening they kept thundering away. Ball after ball flew over or fell short or kicked up the

sand in the enclosure, but they had to fire so high that the shot fell dead

and buried itself in the soft sand. We had no ricochet to fear, and though one popped in through the roof of the log-house and out again through the floor, we soon got used to that sort of horse-play and minded it no more than cricket.

"There is one good thing about all this," observed the captain; "the wood in front of us is likely clear. The ebb has made a good while; our stores should be uncovered. Volunteers to go and bring in pork." Gray and hunter were the first to come forward. Well armed, they

stole out of the stockade, but it proved a useless mission. The mutineers were bolder than we fancied or they put more trust in Israel's gunnery. For four or five of them were busy carrying off our stores and wading out with them to one of the gigs that lay close by, pulling an oar or so to hold her steady against the current. Silver was in the stern-sheets in command; and every man of them was now provided with a musket from some secret magazine of their own.

The captain sat down to his log, and here is the beginning of the entry: Alexander Smollett, master; David

Livesey, ship's doctor; Abraham Gray, carpenter's mate; John Trelawney, owner; John Hunter and Richard Joyce, owner's servants, landsmen—being all that is left faithful of the ship's company—with stores for ten days at short rations, came ashore this day and flew British colours on the log-house in Treasure Island. Thomas Redruth, owner's servant, landsman, shot by the mutineers; James Hawkins,



cabin-boy—

And at the same time, I was wondering over poor Jim Hawkins' fate.

A hail on the land side.

"Somebody hailing us," said Hunter, who was on guard.

"Doctor! Squire! Captain! Hullo, Hunter, is that you?" came the cries.

And I ran to the door in time to see Jim Hawkins, safe and sound, come climbing over the stockade.

# Chapter 18

## Die dokter vertel: Die eerste dag se bakleiery

So vinnig as wat ons kon, druk ons aan deur die strook bosveld wat tussen ons en die blokhuis lê; en met elke stap klink die stemme van die seerowers digterby. Naderhand kon ons selfs hulle voetstappe hoor, en die gekraak van die takke, soos hulle daar deur storm.

Ek begin in te sien dat ons sou swaar kry, en ek kyk of my geweer in orde is.

Kaptein, sê ek, Trelawney skiet die beste. Gee hom jou geweer; sy eie is onbruikbaar.

Hulle ruil om, en Trelawney, wat van die begin van die moeilikheid af bedaard en koel gebly het, bly n oomblik agter om te sien of die geweer in orde is. Ek merk toe dat Gray ongewapen is, en gee my sabel vir hom. Dit het ons almal goed gedoen om te sien hoe hy in sy hand spuug, sy winkbrouwe frons, en die staal laat sing deur die lug. Dit was aan sy hele houding te sien dat ons nuwe maat sy sout werd is.

Veertig tree verder kom ons aan die rand van die bos en sien die blokhuis vlak voor ons staan. Ons kom aan die suidekant van die omheining te lande, en byna op dieselfde oomblik kom sewe van die muiters, met Job Anderson, die bootsman, vooraan, om die hoek gehardloop, onder n vreeslike geskree.

Toe hulle ons sien, bly hulle staan, asof hulle verras is, en voordat hulle weer tot verhaal kon kom, het die squire en ek, en ook Hunter en Joyce van die blokhuis af, kans gekry om te skiet.

Die vier skote het bietjie ver uit mekaar uit geval, maar tog het dit een van die vyand geraak, en die ander neem die loop die bosse in, sonder een oomblik te wag.

Ons het weer gelaai, en gaan toe na die gevalle vyand toe. Hy was mordsdood, deur die hart geskiet.

Ons begin ons net te verheug oor die goeie uitslag, toe daar n pistoolskoot val, van die borne se kant af.

Die koeël fluit langs my oor verby, en die arme Tom Redruth val so lank as hy is op die grond neer. Die squire en ek skiet albei terug; maar ons moes blindweg skiet, en het heel waarskynlik net ons kruit vermors. Toe laai ons weer, en gaan kyk na arme Tom.

Die kaptein en Gray was alreeds besig om sy wond te ondersoek, en ek sien dadelik dat dit klaar was met hom.

Die vabonde was nou blykbaar heeltemal uitmekaar gejaag; want ons kon ongehinder die gewonde man oor die heining tel, en in die

blokhuis indra. Arme ou Tom, van die begin van ons teenspoed af, tot nou toe, had hy geen woord van verbasing, geen klagte of woord van vrees laat hoor nie. Soos n held het hy agter sy matras in die gang van die skip gestaan; elke bevel hee hy sonder n woord deeglik en getrou uitgevoer. Hy was goed n

twintig jaar ouer as die oudste onder ons; en nou moes dit juis hy wees, ou getroue, bedaarde dienaar, wat moes sterwe.

Die squire val op sy knieë langs hom neer, en snik soos n kind, terwyl hy Tom se hande soen.

Is dit klaar met my, dokter? vra hy.

Tom, ou maat, jy gaan huis toe, se ek.

Ek wens ek kon eers n paar skote onder hulle in geskiet het, sug hy.

Tom, se die squire, se tog dat jy my vergewe?

Sou dit nie oneerbiedig van my klink nie, squire? vra hy. Maar tog, dit sy so, Amen!

Na n oomblikkie stilte, vra hy of iemand nie n gebed wou doen nie. Dis tog die gewoonte, voeg hy half verleë daarby. Nie lank daarna nie, het hy die asem uit-geblaas.

Ondertussen het die kaptein, wat heeldag al vir my so danig dik gelyk het oor die bors en by die sakke langs, n menigte allerhande goed voor die dag gehaal: die Britse vlag, n Bybel, n rol dik tou, die dagboek van die skip, pen en ink, en ponde tabak. Hy en Hunter het n lang paal ingeplant in een hoek van die blokhuis, en hy het op die dak geklim, en met sy eie hande die vlag daaraan gehang.

Daarna het hy baie meer op sy gemak gelyk. Toe kom hy die blokhuis weer binne, en begin ons voorraad na te sien, asof daar niks gebeur het nie. Maar al die tyd het hy sy oog op Tom gehou, en sodra alles verby was, kom hy met n tweede vlag, wat hy eerbiedig oor die lyk sprei.

Moenie bekommerd wees nie, meneer, se hy, en druk die squire se hand. Dis alles wel met hom; daar is geen gevaar vir n man wat op sy pos val nie. Dit mag

nie die redcnering van n dominee wees nie, maar dit is tog waar.

Toe roep hy my opsy.

Dr. Livesey, se hy, binne hoeveel weke ver wag u en die squire daardie konvooi?

Ek vertel hom dat dit nie n kwessie van weke was nie, maar van maande; dat, as ons nie terug was teen die einde van Augustus nie, Blandly n skip moes stuur om ons te soek; maar niks vroeër of later nie.

Nou kan jy self uitreken, se ek.

Wel, ja, antwoord die kaptein, en krap sy kop, ons het baie om voor dankbaar te wees, en tog sou ek se dat ons maar in n baie nou draai is. Wat bedoel u? vra ek.

Dis jammer dat ons daardie tweede vrag verloor het. Die ammunisie sal nog gaan, maar die mondvorraad is bitter min.

Plotseling was daar n gefluit en gebulder, en n kanonkoeël vlieg hoog oor die dak van die blokhuis verby, en plof n ent verder in die bosse neer.

Oho! sê die kaptein. Blits maar gerus, hoor! Julle kruit is tog al amper op.

Die tweede skoot was beter gemik, want die koeël val binnekant die omheining, sodat n stofwolk daar opstuif, maar verder het dit nie skade aangerig nie.

Kaptein, sê die squire, die blokhuis kan nie van die skip af gesien word nie. Dit moet die vlag wees waarop hulle mik. Sou dit nie verstandiger wees om dit af te haal nie?

My vlag aftrek? skree die kaptein. Nee, meneer, nooit! En ek dink ons was dit tog almal met hom eens. Die vlag was vir die skelms n bewys dat ons nie vir hulle of hulle bombardement bang was nie.

Die hele aand deur het die skietery aangehou. Die een koeël na die ander het oor ons koppe gevlieg, of het die

sand binne die omheining laat opstuif. Maar hulle moes so hoog skiet, dat die meeste skote versmoor geraak het in die los sand. Daar was geen vrees dat die koeëls sou terugspring nie. Daar het wel een deur die dak geboor en weer onder dwars deur die vloer uit, maar ons het gou gewoond geraak aan die soort kriet-spelery.

Een goeie ding, sê die kaptein, die bos hier voor ons is waarskynlik veilig. Dit is al n bele ruk laagwater; ons boot met die kos daarin le seker nou oop. Vrywilli-gers om te gaan varkvlies haal!

Gray en Hunter was dadelik klaar om te gaan. Goed gewapen, glip hulle stilletjies oor die heining; maar dit was moeite tevergeefs. Die seerowers was aстранter as wat ons gedink het, of anders het hulle groot vertrouwe gestel in Israel se bekwaamheid as kanonnier. Want n stuk of vyf van hulle was reeds besig om ons goed weg te dra na een van die sloepe toe, wat daar digby lê. Silver staan in die agterstewe en deel bevele uit; en elke man was nou voorsien van n geweer, wat hulle ęrens uit n geheime bęreplek in die skip gehaal het.

Die kaptein neem nou sy dagboek, en skryf die volgende daarin: Alexander Smollett, kaptein; David Livesey, skeepsdokter; Abraham Gray, skeepstimmer-man; John Hunter en Richard Joyce, bediendes van die eienaar, landsliede. Dit is al wat getrou gebly het van die skip se bemanning. Hulle het vandag aan land ge-kom, met mondvorraad vir uiters tien dae, en het die Britse vlag gehys op die blokhuis in Skateiland. Thomas Redruth, bediende van die eienaar, landsman, is doodgeskiet deur die muiters. James Hawkins, kajuitsjonge,.....

Wat sou daar tog van Jim geword het, wonder ek juis, toe daar skielik n geroep van die land se kant af kom.

Dokter, squire, kaptein! Haai, Hunter, is dit jy?  
Ek hardloop na die deur toe, net betyds om vir Jim Hawkins  
springlewendig oor die heining te sien kiim.

# Chapter 19

## Narrative Resumed by Jim Hawkins: The Garrison in the Stockade

AS soon as Ben Gunn saw the colours he came to a halt, stopped me by the arm, and sat down. "Now," said he, "there's your friends, sure enough."

"Far more likely it's the mutineers," I answered.

"That!" he cried. "Why, in a place like this, where nobody puts in but gen'lemen of fortune, Silver would fly the Jolly Roger, you don't make no doubt of that. No, that's your friends. There's been blows too, and I reckon your friends has had the

best of it; and here they are ashore in the old stockade, as was made years and years ago by Flint. Ah, he was the man to have a headpiece, was Flint! Barring rum, his match were never seen. He were afraid of none, not he; on'y Silver—Silver was that genteel."

"Well," said I, "that may be so, and

so be it; all the more reason that I should hurry on and join my friends." "Nay, mate," returned Ben, "not you. You're a good boy, or I'm mistook; but you're on'y a boy, all told. Now, Ben Gunn is fly. Rum wouldn't bring me there, where you're going—not rum wouldn't, till I see your born gen'leman and gets it on his word of honour. And you won't forget my words; 'A precious sight (that's what you'll say), a precious sight more confidence'—and then nips him."

And he pinched me the third time with the same air of cleverness.

"And when Ben Gunn is wanted, you know where to find him, Jim. Just

where you found him today. And him that comes is to have a white thing in his hand, and he's to come alone. Oh! And you'll say this: 'Ben Gunn,' says you, 'has reasons of his own.'" "Well," said I, "I believe I understand. You have something to propose, and you wish to see the squire or the doctor, and you're to be found where I found you. Is that all?" "And when? says you," he added. "Why, from about noon observation

to about six bells."

"Good," said I, "and now may I go?" "You won't forget?" he inquired anxiously. "Precious sight, and reasons of his own, says you.

Reasons of his own; that's the mainstay; as between man and man. Well, then"—still holding me—"I reckon you can go, Jim. And, Jim, if

you was to see Silver, you wouldn't go for to sell Ben Gunn? Wild horses wouldn't draw it from you? No, says you. And if them pirates camp ashore, Jim, what would you say but there'd be widders in the morning?"

Here he was interrupted by a loud report, and a cannonball came tearing through the trees and pitched in the sand not a hundred yards from where we two were talking. The

next moment each of us had taken to

his heels in a different direction. For a good hour to come frequent reports shook the island, and balls kept crashing through the woods. I moved from hiding-place to hiding-place, always pursued, or so it seemed to me, by these terrifying missiles. But towards the end of the bombardment, though still I durst not venture in the direction of the stockade, where the balls fell oftenest, I had begun, in a manner, to pluck up my heart again, and after a long detour to the east, crept down among the shore-side trees.

The sun had just set, the sea breeze was rustling and tumbling in the woods and ruffling the grey surface of the anchorage; the tide, too, was far out, and great tracts of sand lay uncovered; the air, after the heat of the day, chilled me through my jacket.

The HISPANIOLA still lay where she had anchored; but, sure enough, there was the Jolly Roger—the black flag of piracy —flying from her peak. Even as I looked, there came another red flash and another report that sent the echoes clattering, and one more round-shot whistled through the air.

It was the last of the cannonade. I lay for some time watching the bustle which succeeded the attack.

Men were demolishing something with axes on the beach near the stockade—the poor jolly-boat, I afterwards discovered. Away, near the mouth of the river, a great fire was glowing among the trees, and between that point and the ship one of the gigs kept coming and going, the men, whom I had seen so gloomy, shouting at the oars like children. But there was a sound in their voices which suggested rum. At length I thought I might return towards the stockade. I was pretty far down on the low, sandy spit that encloses the anchorage to the east, and is joined at half-water to

Skeleton Island; and now, as I rose to my feet, I saw, some distance further down the spit and rising from among low bushes, an isolated rock, pretty high, and peculiarly white in colour. It occurred to me that this might be the white rock of which

Ben Gunn had spoken and that some day or other a boat might be wanted and I should know where to look for one.

Then I skirted among the woods until

I had regained the rear, or

shoreward side, of the stockade, and was soon warmly welcomed by the faithful party.

I had soon told my story and began

to look about me. The log-house was made of unsquared trunks of pine— roof, walls, and floor. The latter stood in several places as much as a foot or a foot and a half above the surface of the sand. There was a porch at the door, and under this porch the little spring welled up into an artificial basin of a rather odd kind—no other than a great ship's kettle of iron, with the bottom knocked out, and sunk "to her

bearings," as the captain said, among the sand.

Little had been left besides the framework of the house, but in one corner there was a stone slab laid

down by way of hearth and an old rusty iron basket to contain the fire. The slopes of the knoll and all the inside of the stockade had been cleared of timber to build the house, and we could see by the stumps what a fine and lofty grove had been destroyed. Most of the soil had been washed away or buried in drift after the removal of the trees; only where the streamlet ran down from the

kettle a thick bed of moss and some ferns and little creeping bushes were still green among the sand. Very close around the stockade—too close

for defence, they said—the wood still flourished high and dense, all of fir

on the land side, but towards the sea with a large admixture of live-oaks. The cold evening breeze, of which I have spoken, whistled through every chink of the rude building and sprinkled the floor with a continual rain of fine sand. There was sand in our eyes, sand in our teeth, sand in our suppers, sand dancing in the spring at the bottom of the kettle, for all the world like porridge beginning to boil. Our chimney was a square hole in the roof; it was but a little

part of the smoke that found its way out, and the rest eddied about the house and kept us coughing and piping the eye.

Add to this that Gray, the new man, had his face tied up in a bandage for a cut he had got in breaking away from the mutineers and that poor old Tom Redruth, still unburied, lay along the wall, stiff and stark, under the Union Jack.

If we had been allowed to sit idle, we should all have fallen in the blues, but Captain Smollett was never the man for that. All hands were called up before him, and he divided us into watches. The doctor and Gray and I for one; the squire, Hunter, and Joyce upon the other. Tired though we all were, two were sent out for firewood; two more were set to dig a grave for Redruth; the doctor was named cook; I was put sentry at the door; and the captain himself went from one to



another, keeping up our spirits and lending a hand wherever it was wanted.

From time to time the doctor came to the door for a little air and to rest his eyes, which were almost smoked out of his head, and whenever he did so, he had a word for me.

"That man Smollett," he said once, "is a better man than I am. And when I say that it means a deal, Jim." Another time he came and was silent for a while. Then he put his head on one side, and looked at me.

"Is this Ben Gunn a man?" he asked. "I do not know, sir," said I. "I am not very sure whether he's sane."

"If there's any doubt about the matter, he is," returned the doctor. "A man who has been three years biting his nails on a desert island, Jim, can't expect to appear as sane as you or me. It doesn't lie in human nature. Was it cheese you said he had a fancy for?"

"Yes, sir, cheese," I answered. "Well, Jim," says he, "just see the good that comes of being dainty in your food. You've seen my snuff-box, haven't you? And you never

saw me take snuff, the reason being that in my snuff-box I carry a piece of Parmesan cheese—a cheese made in Italy, very nutritious. Well, that's for Ben Gunn!"

Before supper was eaten we buried old Tom in the sand and stood round him for a while bare-headed in the breeze. A good deal of firewood had been got in, but not enough for the captain's fancy, and he shook his

head over it and told us we "must get back to this tomorrow rather livelier." Then, when we had eaten our pork and each had a good stiff glass of brandy grog, the three chiefs got together in a corner to discuss

our prospects.

It appears they were at their wits' end what to do, the stores being so low that we must have been starved into surrender long before help came. But our best hope, it was decided, was to kill off the buccaneers until they either hauled

down their flag or ran away with the HISPANIOLA. From nineteen they were already reduced to fifteen, two others were wounded, and one at least—the man shot beside the gun—severely wounded, if he were not dead. Every time we had a crack at them, we were to take it, saving our own lives, with the extremest care.

And besides that, we had two able allies—rum and the climate.

As for the first, though we were about half a mile away, we could hear them roaring and singing late into the night; and as for the second, the doctor staked his wig that, camped where they were in the marsh and

unprovided with remedies, the half of them would be on their backs before a week.

“So,” he added, “if we are not all shot down first they’ll be glad to be packing in the schooner. It’s always a ship, and they can get to buccaneering again, I suppose.” “First ship that ever I lost,” said Captain Smollett.

I was dead tired, as you may fancy; and when I got to sleep, which was not till after a great deal of tossing, I slept like a log of wood.

The rest had long been up and had already breakfasted and increased the pile of firewood by about half as much again when I was wakened by a bustle and the sound of voices.

“Flag of truce!” I heard someone say; and then, immediately after, with a cry of surprise, “Silver himself!”

And at that, up I jumped, and rubbing my eyes, ran to a loophole in the wall.

# Chapter 19

## Jim Hawkins vertel: Die besetting binnekant die omheining

Toe Ben Gunn die vlag sien wapper, bly hy dadelik staan, gryp my aan die arm beet, en gaan toe sit.

Kyk, daar is jou vriende, sê hy.

Ek sou liewers sê dis die seerowers, antwoord ek. Daardie? vra hy. Nee, maat, in n plek soos hierdie, waar niemand anders as seerowers ooit kom nie, sou Silver die swart vlag gehys het, daarvan kan jy seker wees. Nee; dit is jou vriende daardie. Daar was n bakleiere ook gewees, en jou vriende het die beste daarvan af gekom; want daar sit hulle nou in die ou blokhuis wat Flint jare en jare gelede gebou het. A, dit was n man met n kop op sy skouers, die Flint! Hy het sy Moses nooit gekry nie, of dit mag die brandewyn gewees het. Hy was vir geen mens op aarde bang nie, net vir Silver; Silver was altyd so glad met sy mond.

“Wel, sê ek, dit mag alles waar wees. Al hoe meer rede vir my om gou te maak om by my vriende te kom. Nee, maat, antwoord Ben, wag n bietjie. Jy is n goeie seun, of ek moet dit lelik mis he; maar jy bly tog maar n seun. Al betaal jy my rum, gaan ek nog nie met jou saam nie. Ek wil eers daardie squire van jou onder vier oe sien, en sy woord van eer kry. En jy moenie my woorde vergeet nie, hoor: ,Veel meer vertrou, moet jy sê, en dan knyp jy hom so.

En toe knyp hy my vir die derde keer, met dieselfde skelm laggie op sy gesig.

En as julle Ben Gunn wil sien, dan weet jy waar om hom te kry, Jim. Net waar jy hom vandag gekry het. En die een wat kom, moet n wit ding in sy hand hou, en hy moet alleen kom. O, ja, en jy moet nog dit ook sê: Ben Gunn, sê jy, het sy eie redes.

Ek dink ek verstaan jou, jy het iets wat jy wil vertel, en jy wil graag met die dokter of die squire praat; en jy sal te vinde wees waar ek jou vandag gekry het. Is dit reg? vra ek.

En wanneer? Wel, so tussen twaalfuur op die middag en ses glase, sê Ben.

Goed, sê ek, en mag ek nou maar gaan?

Jy sal tog nie vergeet nie, Jim? vra hy angstig. Veel meer vertrou, en sy eie redes, moet jy sê. Wel, dan kan jy nou maar gaan, dink ek, (maar al die tyd hou hy my nog vas). En Jim, as jy dalk vir Silver ontmoet, sal jy tog nie vir Ben Gunn verrai nie, nê? Nee, sê jy. Goed.

En as daardie vabonde vannag op die eiland slaap, Jim, kan jy daar seker van wees dat daar móre-oggend n hele paar weduwees op die wêreld sal wees. Skielik klink daar n geweldige knal, en n kanonkoeël kom dreunend deur die bome, en plof in die sand neer, nie n honderd tree van waar ons staan nie. Die volgende oomblik was ons albei op die loop, elkeen sy eie koers uit.

Vir meer as n uur daarna het die eiland gedreun van die skote, en het die een koeël na die ander tussen die bosse gebars. Ek het van die een skuilplek na die ander gekruip, maar dit lyk vir my of die gevaarlike goed al agter my aankom. Maar naderhand het ek tog weer bietjie moed gekry. Ek kon dit nog nie waag om na die blokhuis se kant toe te gaan nie, want daar val die meeste skote, maar ek loop met n groot ompad na die see se kant toe af.

Die son was net onder, n koel windjie speel deur die bome, en oor die water van die ankerplaas; dit was laagwater, en groot stroke sand lê oop. Die aandluggie, na die hitte van die dag, het my laat bewe dwarsdeur my baadjie.

Die Hispaniola lê nog net waar ons die anker laat val het; maar, ja waarlik, daar wapper die Jolly Roger, die swart rowersvlag, aan die mas. Toe ek nog so staan en kyk, kom daar weer n rooi vlam, en n knal, wat die eggos laat antwoord gee, en n kanonkoeël fluit by my verby die bosse in. Dit was die laaste skoot van die bombardement.

Ek lê so n rukkie stil en kyk na die gedoente wat aan die gang was. Op die strand, naby die blokhuis, was n paar mans besig met n ding stukkend te kap. Ek het naderhand uitgevind dat dit die arme jolboot was. Daar ver, naby die mond van die rivier, brand n groot vuur tussen die bome, en tussen daardie plek en die skip gaan een van die sloepe gedurig heen en weer. Die matrose, wat voorheen so nors gelyk het, sit nou en sing soos kinders. Maar hulle stemme klink vir my of hulle rum gedrink het.

Eindelik het ek dit gewaag om na die fort toe terug te gaan. Ek was ver af op die lae stuk sand, wat aan die oostekant die ankerplaas omsluit, en wat deurloop tot by Geraamte-Eiland; en noudat ek op my voete staan, sien ek n entjie verder af, tussen die lae bossies, n rots wat alleen staan, taamlik hoog en van n eienaardige wit kleur. Dit val my toe by dat dit seker die wit rots was waarvan Ben Gunn gepraat het, en dat ek dit moes onthou as daar miskien een dag n boot nodig was.

Toe loop ek langs die bome af, tot ek aan die agterkant van die paalheining uitkom, en kort daarna word ek verwelkom deur my vriende in die blokhuis.

Ek het gou my storie vertel, en begin toe die plek te bekyk. Die dak, vloer en mure van die blokhuis was van ongeskaafde denneblokke gemaak. Die vloer het sowat n voet

bokant die sand uitgestaan. By die deur was n soort portaaltjie, en hieronder het die fonteintjie opgeborrel en die water val dan in n snaakse soort kom. Dit was niks anders nie as n groot yster skeepsketel, waarvan die boom uitgeslaan was, en wat tot die rand toe in die sand ingedruk was.

Daar was so te sê niks meer as die geraamte van die huis nie; maar in een hoek was n plat klip vir n vuur-maakplek, en n ou verroeste ysterbak vir die vuur.

Al die bome teen die hang van die heuwel, en binnekant die omheining was afgekap om die huis te bou, en aan die stompe kon n mens nog sien watter pragtige plantasie hier moes gestaan het. Byna al die grond was weggespoel; net waar die stroompie uit die ketel uitvloei, was daar n bietjie groen mos en varings tussen die sand.

Dig teen die omheining aan, te dig vir n beskutting, was daar nog hoë, dik borne, almal denne, aan die land se kant, maar na die seekant toe, meeste eike.

Die koue aandwindjie fluit deur elke skeurtjie van die ruwe gebou, sodat daar n gedurige sandreën op die vloer val. Daar was sand in ons oë, sand tussen ons tande, sand in ons kos, sand wat rondans in die ketel water, net soos pap wat begin te kook. Ons skoorsteen was niks anders nie as n vierkantige gat in die dak. n Klein gedeelte van die rook het daardeur getrek, die res het in die huis rondgedwarrel, en ons laat hoes, en die trane uit ons oe laat loop.

Boonop was Gray se gesig toegebind met n doek, oor n sny wat hy van die muiters gekry het. Arme ou Tom Redruth lê nog onbegrawe teen die muur, toegemaak met die Union Jack.

As ons moes ledig gesit het, sou ons almal moed verloor het, maar Kaptein Smollett was nie van so n aard nie. Ons moes almal voor hom kom staan, en hy verdeel ons toe in wagte.

Die dokter, Gray en ek was die eerste, en dan die squire, Hunter en Joyce vir die tweede wag. So moeg as ons was, moes ons gaan vuurmaakhout soek; twee ander moes n graf maak vir Redruth; die dokter sou kok wees; ek moes by die deur op wag staan; en die kaptein self loop van die een na die ander, spreek ons moed in, en help n handjie waar hy kan.

Van tyd tot tyd kom die dokter na die deur toe, om sy oë te laat rus kry, want dit het vreeslik gebrand van die rook; en elke slag praat hy n paar woorde met my.

Daardie Smollett is n beter man as ekself, Jim. En as ek dit sê, beteken dit baie.

Op n ander keer was hy so n rukkie stil. Toe kyk hy my so skuins aan en sê:

Is daardie Ben Gunn n mens?

Ek weet tog nie, dokter, sê ek. Dit lyk vir my nie of hy heeltemal reg is nie.

As jy enigszins rede het om daaraan te twyfel, dan is hy by sy positiewe. n Mens wat drie jaar lank op n onbewoonde eiland gesit het, met niks te doen nie kan nie so verstandig lyk soos jy en ek nie. Dit lê nie in die menslike natuur nie. Waarvoor het hy so lus gehad, sê jy, was dit kaas?

Ja, dokter, kaas, sê ek.

Wel Jim, sê die dokter, kyk tog net hoe goed is dit as n mens van lekkernye hou. Jy het my snuifdoos gesien, nie waar nie? En tog het jy my nooit sien snuif gebruik nie. Die rede is, dat ek in daardie snuifdoos n stukkie Parmesaanse kaas hou; die kaas word in Italië gemaak, en is baie voedsaam. Nou ja, daardie stukkie kaas is nou vir Ben Gunn!

Die aand het ons ou Tom onder die sand begrawe, en vir n paar oomblikke het ons stilgestaan rondom sy graf. Daar was n goeie klompie brandhout bymekaar, maar nie genoeg na die kaptein se sin nie. Hy skud sy kop, en sê dat ons die volgende dag vir ons n bietjie beter moes roer.

Nadat ons elkeen n stuk varkveis gekry het om te eet, met n stywe glas brandewyn daarby, het die drie hoofde van ons geselskap bymekaar gaan sit in n hoek, om die toestand te bespreek.

Hulle was raad-op wat om aan te vang, want ons voorraad kos was so klein, dat die honger ons sou dryf om oor te gee, lank voordat daar hulp kon opdaag. Ons enigste hoop was om die seerowers af te maai, totdat hulle eindelijk hulle vlag afhaal, of met die Hispaniola wegvlug. Van neëntien was hulle nou al verminder tot vyftien; buitendien was daar twee gewond, en een daarvan, die man wat by die kanon geskiet is, was seker al dood. Ons moes nou maar elke kans waarneem om hulle onder die koeëls te kry. Buitendien het ons twee bekwame bondgenote gehad, rum en die klimaat.

Ons was omtrent n halwe myl van hulle kamp af, en tog kon ons hulle hoor sing en skree tot laat in die nag; en wat die klimaat betref, het die dokter gesê, hy wed dat hulle oor n paar dae almal plat lê aan die koors.

Dus, voeg hy daarby, as ons nie teen daardie tyd almal doodgeskiet is nie, sal hulle maar te bly wees om te laat vat in die Hispaniola. Dan het hulle mos weer n skip om mee te gaan roof.

Dit sal die eerste skip wees wat ek ooit verloor het, sê Kaptein Smollett.

Ek was doodmoeg, soos n mens kan begryp; en toe ek eindelijk aan die slaap raak, het ek soos n klip geslaap.

Die ander was al lank op, en het klaar geëet, en n groot hoop brandhout bymekaar gemaak, toe ek wakker skrik van n geraas en die

geluid van stemme.

„n Wit vlag! hoor ek iemand sê; en dadelik daarop  
sê iemand anders verbaas: Dis Long John Silver self! Ek spring dadelik  
op, vrywe my oë, en hardloop na n skietgat toe in die muur.

# Chapter 20

## Silver's Embassy

SURE enough, there were two men just outside the stockade, one of them waving a white cloth, the other, no less a person than Silver himself, standing placidly by.

It was still quite early, and the coldest morning that I think I ever was abroad in—a chill that pierced into the marrow. The sky was bright and cloudless overhead, and the tops of the trees shone rosily in the sun. But where Silver stood with his lieutenant, all was still in shadow, and they waded knee-deep in a low white vapour that had crawled

during the night out of the morass. The chill and the vapour taken together told a poor tale of the island. It was plainly a damp, feverish, unhealthy spot.

“Keep indoors, men,” said the captain. “Ten to one this is a trick.” Then he hailed the buccaneer.

“Who goes? Stand, or we fire.” “Flag of truce,” cried Silver. The captain was in the porch,

keeping himself carefully out of the way of a treacherous shot, should any be intended. He turned and spoke to us, “Doctor’s watch on the lookout. Dr. Livesey take the north side, if you please; Jim, the east; Gray, west. The watch below, all hands to load muskets. Lively, men, and careful.”

And then he turned again to the mutineers.

“And what do you want with your flag of truce?” he cried.

This time it was the other man who replied.

“Cap’n Silver, sir, to come on board and make terms,” he shouted.

“Cap’n Silver! Don’t know him. Who’s he?” cried the captain. And we could hear him adding to himself, “Cap’n, is it? My heart, and here’s promotion!”

Long John answered for himself.

“Me, sir. These poor lads have chosen me cap’n, after your desertion, sir”—laying a particular

emphasis upon the word “desertion.” “We’re willing to submit, if we can come to terms, and no bones about it. All I ask is your word, Cap’n Smollett, to let me safe and sound

out of this here stockade, and one minute to get out o’ shot before a gun is fired.”

“My man,” said Captain Smollett, “I have not the slightest desire to talk to you. If you wish to talk to me, you



can come, that's all. If there's any treachery, it'll be on your side, and the Lord help you."

"That's enough, cap'n," shouted Long John cheerily. "A word from you's enough. I know a gentleman, and you may lay to that."

We could see the man who carried the flag of truce attempting to hold Silver back. Nor was that wonderful, seeing how cavalier had been the captain's answer. But Silver laughed at him aloud and slapped

him on the back as if the idea of alarm had been absurd. Then he advanced to the stockade, threw over his crutch, got a leg up, and with great vigour and skill succeeded in surmounting the fence and dropping safely to the other side.

I will confess that I was far too much taken up with what was going on to

be of the slightest use as sentry; indeed, I had already deserted my eastern loophole and crept up behind the captain, who had now seated himself on the threshold, with his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands, and his eyes fixed on the

water as it bubbled out of the old iron kettle in the sand. He was whistling "Come, Lasses and Lads." Silver had terrible hard work getting up the knoll. What with the steepness of the incline, the thick tree stumps, and the soft sand, he and his crutch were as helpless as a ship in stays.

But he stuck to it like a man in silence, and at last arrived before the captain, whom he saluted in the

handsomest style. He was tricked out in his best; an immense blue coat, thick with brass buttons, hung as low as to his knees, and a fine laced hat was set on the back of his head.

"Here you are, my man," said the captain, raising his head. "You had better sit down."

"You ain't a-going to let me inside, cap'n?" complained Long John. "It's a main cold morning, to be sure, sir, to sit outside upon the sand."

"Why, Silver," said the captain, "if you had pleased to be an honest man,

you might have been sitting in your galley. It's your own doing. You're either my ship's cook—and then you were treated handsome—or Cap'n Silver, a common mutineer and pirate, and then you can go hang!" "Well, well, cap'n," returned the

sea-cook, sitting down as he was bidden on the sand, "you'll have to give me a hand up again, that's all. A sweet pretty place you have of it here. Ah, there's Jim! The top of the morning to you, Jim. Doctor, here's my service. Why, there you all are together like a happy family, in a manner of speaking."

"If you have anything to say, my man, better say it," said the captain. "Right you were, Cap'n Smollett," replied Silver. "Dooty is dooty, to be sure. Well now, you look here, that was a good lay of yours last night. I don't deny it was a good lay. Some of you pretty handy with a handspike-end. And I'll not deny neither but what some of my people was shook—maybe all was shook; maybe I was shook myself; maybe

that's why I'm here for terms. But you mark me, cap'n, it won't do twice, by thunder! We'll have to do sentry-go and ease off a point or so on the rum. Maybe you think we were all a sheet in the wind's eye. But I'll tell you I

was sober; I was on'y dog tired; and if I'd awoke a second sooner, I'd 'a caught you at the act, I would. He wasn't dead when I got round to him, not he."

"Well?" says Captain Smollett as cool as can be.

All that Silver said was a riddle to him, but you would never have guessed it from his tone. As for me, I began to have an inkling. Ben Gunn's last words came back to my mind. I began to suppose that he had paid the buccaneers a visit while they all lay drunk together round their fire, and I reckoned up with glee that we had only fourteen enemies to deal with.

"Well, here it is," said Silver. "We want that treasure, and we'll have it-

-that's our point! You would just as soon save your lives, I reckon; and that's yours. You have a chart, haven't you?"

"That's as may be," replied the captain.

"Oh, well, you have, I know that," returned Long John. "You needn't be so husky with a man; there ain't a particle of service in that, and you may lay to it. What I mean is, we want your chart. Now, I never meant you no harm, myself."

"That won't do with me, my man," interrupted the captain. "We know exactly what you meant to do, and we don't care, for now, you see, you can't do it."

And the captain looked at him calmly and proceeded to fill a pipe. "If Abe Gray—" Silver broke out. "Avast there!" cried Mr. Smollett. "Gray told me nothing, and I asked him nothing; and what's more, I would see you and him and this whole island blown clean out of the water into blazes first. So there's my mind for you, my man, on that."

This little whiff of temper seemed to cool Silver down. He had been growing nettled before, but now he pulled himself together.

"Like enough," said he. "I would set no limits to what gentlemen might consider shipshape, or might not, as the case were. And seein' as how you are about to take a pipe, cap'n, I'll make so free as do likewise." And he filled a pipe and lighted it;

and the two men sat silently smoking for quite a while, now looking each other in the face, now stopping their tobacco, now leaning forward to

spit. It was as good as the play to see them.

"Now," resumed Silver, "here it is. You give us the chart to get the treasure by, and drop shooting poor seamen and stoving of their heads in

while asleep. You do that, and we'll offer you a choice. Either you come aboard along of us, once the treasure shipped, and then I'll give you my affy-davy, upon my word of honour, to clap you somewhere safe ashore. Or if that ain't to your fancy, some of my hands being rough and having old

scores on account of hazing, then you can stay here, you can. We'll divide stores with you, man for man; and I'll give my affy-davy, as before to

speak the first ship I sight, and send

'em here to pick you up. Now, you'll own that's talking. Handsomer you couldn't look to get, now you. And I hope"—raising his voice—"that all

hands in this here block house will overhaul my words, for what is spoke to one is spoke to all." Captain Smollett rose from his seat and knocked out the ashes of his pipe in the palm of his left hand.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"Every last word, by thunder!" answered John. "Refuse that, and you've seen the last of me but musket-balls."

"Very good," said the captain. "Now you'll hear me. If you'll come up one by one, unarmed, I'll engage to clap you all in irons and take you home to a fair trial in England. If you won't, my name is Alexander Smollett, I've

flown my sovereign's colours, and I'll see you all to Davy Jones. You can't find the treasure. You can't sail the ship—there's not a man among you fit to sail the ship. You can't

fight us—Gray, there, got away from five of you. Your ship's in irons, Master Silver; you're on a lee shore, and so you'll find. I stand here and tell you so; and they're the last good words you'll get from me, for in the name of heaven, I'll put a bullet in your back when next I meet you. Tramp, my lad. Bundle out of this, please, hand over hand, and double quick."

Silver's face was a picture; his eyes

started in his head with wrath. He shook the fire out of his pipe. "Give me a hand up!" he cried. "Not I," returned the captain. "Who'll give me a hand up?" he roared.

Not a man among us moved. Growling the foulest imprecations, he crawled along the sand till he got hold of the porch and could hoist

himself again upon his crutch. Then he spat into the spring.

“There!” he cried. “That’s what I think of ye. Before an hour’s out, I’ll stove in your old block house like a rum puncheon. Laugh, by thunder, laugh! Before an hour’s out, ye’ll

laugh upon the other side. Them that die’ll be the lucky ones.”

And with a dreadful oath he stumbled off, ploughed down the sand, was helped across the stockade, after four or five failures, by the man with the flag of truce, and disappeared in an instant afterwards among the trees.

# Chapter 20

## Silver kom as afgesant

Ja waarlik, daar staan twee mans net anderkant die paalheining, en een van hulle swaai n wit lap; die ander een, niemand minder as Silver nie, staan doodbedoord langs hom.

Dit was nog vroeg, en die koudste more wat ek al ooit beleef het; die koue, klam lug dring deur tot in n mens se murg. Die lug was helder en onbewolk, en die boomtoppe blink in die sonlig. Maar daar waar Silver en sy maat staan en wag, le die skaduwee nog, en hulle staan tot by die knieë in n dik wit mis wat in die nag uit die moeras opgekom het. Dit was duidelik dat die eiland n klam, koorsige, ongesonde plek was.

„Bly binne, manne, se die kaptein. Tien teen een is dit n strik.

Toe skree hy vir hulle:

Werda! Staand, of ons skiet!

Wit vlag, se Silver.

Die kaptein was in die voorportaal, maar hy steek sy lyf sorgvuldig weg, in geval van n onverwagte koeël. Skielik kyk hy om na ons toe en se:

Dokter se wag op die uitkyk. Dr. Livesey aan die noordekant, asseblief; Jim, Oos; Gray, Wes. Die ander hou julle klaar om die gewere te laai. Gou, manne, en wees versigtig.

Toe praat hy weer met die muiters:

En wat wil julle he met julle wit vlag? vra hy.

Die slag was dit die ander kerel wat antwoord gee: Kaptein Silver wil aan boord kom om met u te onderhandel, skreeu hy.

Kaptein Silver? Ek ken hom nie. Wie is hy? En ons kon hoor hoe hy binnesmonds brom: Kaptein! By my siel, dit is vir jou promosie!

Nou praat Long John self:

Dis ek, meneer. Die arme kerels het my kaptein gemaak nadat u ons in die steek gelaat het, met besonder nadruk op die laaste woorde. Ons is gewillig om oor te gee, as ons kan ooreenkom. Al wat ek vra, Kaptein Smollett, is u woord van eer, dat ek hierdie fort weer ongehinder mag verlaat, en net een minuut om weg te kom voor daar n skoot op my geskiet word. My liewe kerel, se Kaptein Smollett, ek het nie die minste begeerte om met jou te praat nie. Maar as jy met my wil kom praat, kom dan maar. As daar verraad gepleeg word, sal dit aan jou kant wees, en mag die Here jou dan help!

Dis genoeg vir my, Kaptein, se Long John, ewe vrolik. U woord is genoeg. Ek weet hoe n gentleman lyk, daarop kan u staat maak.

Ek kon sien dat die man wat die vlag dra sy bes doen om Silver terug te hou. Dit was ook glad nie wonderlik nie, want die kaptein was maar kortaf gewees. Maar Silver lag hom uit, en klof hom op die skoucr; asof hy meen dis verspot om bang te wees. Toe kom hy na die heining toe, gooi sy kruk oor, swaai sy been oor, en spring met wonderlike vlugheid aan die binnekant af.

Ek moet erken dat ek op die oomblik niks beteken het as wag nie. Ek het glad te veel belang gestel in wat gaande was. Ek het my pos aan die oostelike skietgat verlaat, en staan nou vlak agter die kaptein, waar hy op die drumpel sit, met sy elmboë op sy knieë, sy kop tussen die hande, en sy oë op die water soos dit daar opborrel uit die ou ketel. Onderwyl fluit hy saggies n ou deuntjie: Come, Lasses and Lads.

Silver het baie moeite gehad om teen die heuweltjie uit te kom. Dit was baie steil, en die sand was so sag, dat hy en sy kruk so hulpeloos was as n skip wat vasle. Maar sonder n woord het hy dit volgehOU, tot hy eindelijk voor die kaptein staan, en hom ewe beleef groet. Hy was uitgedos in sy beste pak; n lang blou jas, met n dubbele ry koperknope, hang tot onderkant sy knieë, en n hoed met fyn kant opgemaak, sit agter op sy kop.

Wel, hier is jy, se die kaptein, en hy lig sy kop op. Gaan sit.

Mag ek dan nie binnekom nie, kaptein? kla Long John. Dis n baie koue more om hier op die sand te sit.

Kyk hier, Silver, se die kaptein, as jy n eerlike man wou gewees het, kon jy nou lekker warm gesit het in jou kombuis. Dis jou eie skuld. Jy is of my skepskok, en word goed behandel, of Kaptein Silver, n gemene mouter, en seerower, en dan kan jy vir my part na die duiwel gaan!

So, Kaptein, se die skepskok, en hy gaan sit op die sand. Wel, u sal my weer hier moet ophelp, dis al. Alle wêreld, maar julle het hier n gawe plek! En daar is Jim ook! Goeiemore, Jim, hoe gaan dit? Dokter, ek groet u beleef. Julle sit hier soos n gelukkige huisgesin bymekaar.

As jy iets te se het, dan moet jy maar gou maak, se die kaptein.

Reg so, Kaptein Smollett, Plig is plig. Wel kyk hier, daardie poets wat julle ons gisteraand gebak het, was lelik. Dit lyk of party van julle here hier nogal net handig is met n stuk yster. En ek sal nie ontken, dat party van ons lelik geskrik het nie. Miskien het ek self geskrik, en dat ek om die rede gekom het om te onderhandel. Maar pasop, julle sal dit nie vir die tweedemaal regkry nie, hoor! Ons sal moet wagstaan, en n bietjie suiniger wees met die rum. Miskien het u gedink ons was almal n bietjie hoog aan? Ek kan u verseker dat ekself nugter was. Ek was net maar so moeg as n hond; en as ek n oomblik eerder wakker geword het, dan het ek julle net gevang. Hy was nog glad nie dood toe ek by hom kom nie.

Wel? sê Kaptein Smollett, so koel as kan wees.

Al wat Silver daar praat, was natuurlik vir hom n raaisel, maar geen mens sou dit ooit aan sy houding gemerk het nie. Stadigaan begin ek die waarheid agter te kom. Ben Gunn se laaste woorde val my weer by, en ek verstaan nou dat hy die seerowers n besoek gebring het, solank as hulle daar dronk langs die vuur gelê het. Met blydschap reken ek nou uit, dat daar nog maar net veertien vyande vir ons oorbly.

Sake staan so, sê Silver, Ons wil daardie goud he, en ons sal dit kry, dit is seker. Julle wil seker graag met die lewe daar af kom, nie waar nie? Maar dit is natuurlik julle eie saak. Julle het n kaart, nie waar nie?

Dit mag wees, sê die kaptein.

Ek weet julle het, sê Long John. U hoef nie so kortaf te wees nie, kaptein. Ons wil eenvoudig daardie kaart he, dis al. Persoonlik het ek nooit iets teen een van julle gehad nie.

Dit sal jy my nie wys maak nie, val Kaptein Smollett hom in die rede. Ons weet presies wat julle van plan was om te doen, maar nou maak dit nie saak nie, want julle kan dit nou tog nie meer doen nie.

Die kaptein kyk hom bedaard aan, en begin sy pyp te stop.

As Abe Gray altemit... begin Silver.

Stadig! sê Kaptein Smollett. Gray het my niks vertel nie, en ek het hom ook niks gevra nie; en wat meer is, ek sou vir jou en hom en hierdie hele ou eilandjie liefers in die lug sien vlieg. So, nou weet jy wat ek van die spul dink.

Nou dat die kaptein ongeduldig lyk, word Silver kalm. Hy het in die begin n bietjie opgewonde gelyk, maar nou trek hy hom weer reg.

Dit mag wees, sê hy,... „n Mens weet nooit wat julle, gebore gentlemen as eerlik en reg sal beskou nie. Maar ek sien u stop n pypie, Kaptein, nou sal ek ook maar so maak.

En hy begin langsaam sy pyp te stop en dit op te steek.

Daar sit die twee mans nou regoor mekaar en rook, sonder om een woord te praat. Nou en dan kyk hulle mekaar vas in die oë, dan stop een die tabak in sy pyp in, of leun vooroor om te spuug. Dit was so goed soos n toneelspel vir ons wat staan en kyk.

Ek wil n voorstel maak, se Silver eindelijk, U gee vir ons die kaart om die goud mee te gaan soek, en hou op met skiet op ons, arme seelui, en om ons te vermoor in ons slaap. As julle hierin toestem, kan julle een van twee kies. Kom saam met ons, sodra ons die goud aan boord het, en dan gee ek u my woord van eer dat ons u almal veilig erens aan wal sal sit. Of, as u dit nie wil nie, en aangesien party van my manskappe maar n bietjie wraaksugtig is, en miskien die een of ander ou grief teen u het, wel, dan kan julle hier op die eiland bly. Ons sal die hele voorraad kos en ammunisie met julle deel; en ek gee u my woord van eer dat ek die eerste skip wat ons teëkom, sal stuur

om julle te haal. Nou, billiker kan u dit nie verlang nie, dis seker. En ek hoop (hier praat hy al hoe harder) dat elke man hier in die blokhuis my gehoor het, want wat ek aan een sê, dit sê ek aan almal.

Kaptein Smollett staan op, en klop die as van sy pyp in sy linkerhand uit.

Is dit al? vra hy.

Dis die allerlaaste woord! sê Silver met n vloek. Weier dit en dit sal die laaste sien van my wees, maar nie van my kruut en lood nie.

Goed, sê die kaptein. Luister nou weer na my. As julle een vir een, ongewapen, hierheen wil kom, sal ek onderneem om julle almal te boei, en so na Engeland toe te neem, om voor n gereghof te verskyn. As julle dit nie wil nie, wel, my naam is Alexander Smollett, ek het die vlag van my koning hier gehys, en ek sê julle kan almal na die duiwel gaan. Julle sal die skat nie kry nie.

Julle kan die skip nie bestuur nie; daar is nie een onder julle daartoe in staat nie. Julle kan teen ons nie veg nie. Gray, stok-alleen, het vyf van julle baas ge-raak. Jou skip le vas, en jy sit aan laer wal, Meneer Silver, glo my vry. Sowaar as ek hier voor jou staan, dit is die laaste goeie woord wat jy van my sal kry; want, as ek jou weer ontmoet, sal ek so seker as wat n koeël deur jou ribbes jaag. Trap, man! Maak dat jy hier weg kom, so gou as jy op aarde kan!

Silver se gesig was pers van boosaardigheid; dit lyk of sy oe uit hulle kaste kan bars. Hy klop sy pyp uit.

Gee my jou hand; ek wil opstaan! skree hy.

Nee dankie, sê die kaptein.

Wie sal my ophelp? brul hy.

Niemand van ons roer nie. Met die vreeslikste vloekwoorde kruip hy deur die sand, tot by die kosyn van die deur, en op die manier kry hy weer sy kruk onder die arm. Toe spuug hy in die fontein.

Daar! sê hy, dit is wat ek van julle dink. Voor nog n uur verby is, sal ek julle ou blokhuis inmekaar stoot soos n leë brandewynvat. Lag maar, as julle wil! Binne n uur sal julle aan die verkeerde kant van julle mond

lag. Die wat sterf, sal die gelukkigste daarvan afkom.

En met n vreeslike vloek sukkel hy weg deur die sand, tot by die paalheining, waar die man met die wit vlag hom oorhelp, nadat hy n paar maal teruggegely het, en toe verdwyn hy baie gou tussen die bosse in.



# Chapter 21

## The Attack

AS soon as Silver disappeared, the captain, who had been closely watching him, turned towards the interior of the house and found not a man of us at his post but Gray. It was the first time we had ever seen him angry.

“Quarters!” he roared. And then, as we all slunk back to our places, “Gray,” he said, “I’ll put your name in the log; you’ve stood by your duty like a seaman. Mr. Trelawney, I’m surprised at you, sir. Doctor, I thought you had worn the king’s coat! If that was how you served at Fontenoy, sir, you’d have been better in your berth.”

The doctor’s watch were all back at their loopholes, the rest were busy loading the spare muskets, and everyone with a red face, you may be certain, and a flea in his ear, as the saying is.

The captain looked on for a while in silence. Then he spoke.

“My lads,” said he, “I’ve given Silver a broadside. I pitched it in red-hot on purpose; and before the hour’s out, as he said, we shall be boarded. We’re outnumbered, I needn’t tell you that, but we fight in shelter; and a minute ago I should

have said we fought with discipline. I’ve no manner of doubt that we can drub them, if you choose.”

Then he went the rounds and saw, as he said, that all was clear.

On the two short sides of the house, east and west, there were only two

loopholes; on the south side where the porch was, two again; and on the north side, five. There was a round score of muskets for the seven of us; the firewood had been built into four piles—tables, you might say—one about the middle of each side, and

on each of these tables some ammunition and four loaded muskets were laid ready to the hand of the defenders. In the middle, the cutlasses lay ranged.

“Toss out the fire,” said the captain; “the chill is past, and we mustn’t have smoke in our eyes.”

The iron fire-basket was carried bodily out by Mr. Trelawney, and the embers smothered among sand. “Hawkins hasn’t had his breakfast. Hawkins, help yourself, and back to your post to eat it,” continued Captain Smollett. “Lively, now, my lad; you’ll want it before you’ve done. Hunter, serve out a round of brandy to all hands.”

And while this was going on, the captain completed, in his own mind,

the plan of the defence.

“Doctor, you will take the door,” he resumed. “See, and don’t expose yourself; keep within, and fire through the porch. Hunter, take the east side, there. Joyce, you stand by the west, my man. Mr. Trelawney,

you are the best shot—you and Gray will take this long north side, with the five loopholes; it’s there the danger is. If they can get up to it and fire in upon us through our own ports, things would begin to look dirty. Hawkins, neither you nor I are much account at the shooting; we’ll stand by to load and bear a hand.”

As the captain had said, the chill was past. As soon as the sun had climbed above our girdle of trees, it fell with all its force upon the clearing and drank up the vapours at a draught. Soon the sand was baking and the resin melting in the logs of the block house. Jackets and coats

were flung aside, shirts thrown open at the neck and rolled up to the shoulders; and we stood there, each at his post, in a fever of heat and anxiety.

An hour passed away.

“Hang them!” said the captain. “This is as dull as the doldrums. Gray, whistle for a wind.”

And just at that moment came the first news of the attack.

“If you please, sir,” said Joyce, “if I see anyone, am I to fire?”

“I told you so!” cried the captain. “Thank you, sir,” returned Joyce with the same quiet civility.

Nothing followed for a time, but the remark had set us all on the alert, straining ears and eyes—the musketeers with their pieces balanced in their hands, the captain out in the middle of the block house with his mouth very tight and a frown on his face.

So some seconds passed, till suddenly Joyce whipped up his musket and fired. The report had scarcely died away ere it was repeated and repeated from without in a scattering volley, shot behind shot, like a string of geese, from every side of the enclosure. Several bullets struck the log-house, but not one entered; and as the smoke cleared away and vanished, the stockade and the woods around it looked as quiet and empty as before. Not a bough waved, not the gleam of a musket-barrel betrayed the presence of our foes.

“Did you hit your man?” asked the captain.

“No, sir,” replied Joyce. “I believe not, sir.”

“Next best thing to tell the truth,” muttered Captain Smollett. “Load his gun, Hawkins. How many should say there were on your side, doctor?”

"I know precisely," said Dr. Livesey. "Three shots were fired on this side. I saw the three flashes—

two close together—one farther to the west."

"Three!" repeated the captain. "And how many on yours, Mr. Trelawney?"

But this was not so easily answered. There had come many from the north—seven by the squire's computation, eight or nine according to Gray. From the east and west only a single shot had been fired. It was plain, therefore, that the attack

would be developed from the north and that on the other three sides we were only to be annoyed by a show of hostilities. But Captain Smollett made no change in his arrangements.

If the mutineers succeeded in crossing the stockade, he argued, they would take possession of any unprotected loophole and shoot us down like rats in our own stronghold.

Nor had we much time left to us for thought. Suddenly, with a loud huzza, a little cloud of pirates leaped from the woods on the north side and ran straight on the stockade. At the same moment, the fire was once more opened from the woods, and a rifle ball sang through the doorway and knocked the doctor's musket into bits.

The boarders swarmed over the fence like monkeys. Squire and Gray fired again and yet again; three men fell, one forwards into the enclosure, two back on the outside. But of

these, one was evidently more frightened than hurt, for he was on his feet again in a crack and instantly disappeared among the trees. Two had bit the dust, one had fled, four had made good their footing inside our defences, while from the shelter of the woods seven or eight men, each evidently supplied with several muskets, kept up a hot though useless fire on the log-house.

The four who had boarded made straight before them for the building, shouting as they ran, and the men among the trees shouted back to encourage them. Several shots were fired, but such was the hurry of the marksmen that not one appears to have taken effect. In a moment, the four pirates had swarmed up the mound and were upon us.

The head of Job Anderson, the boatswain, appeared at the middle loophole.

"At 'em, all hands—all hands!" he roared in a voice of thunder.

At the same moment, another pirate grasped Hunter's musket by the muzzle, wrenched it from his hands, plucked it through the loophole, and

with one stunning blow, laid the poor fellow senseless on the floor. Meanwhile a third, running unharmed all around the house, appeared

suddenly in the doorway and fell with his cutlass on the doctor.

Our position was utterly reversed. A moment since we were firing, under cover, at an exposed enemy; now it was we who lay uncovered and could not return a blow.

The log-house was full of smoke, to which we owed our comparative safety. Cries and confusion, the flashes and reports of pistol-shots, and one loud groan rang in my ears.

“Out, lads, out, and fight ‘em in the open! Cutlasses!” cried the captain. I snatched a cutlass from the pile, and someone, at the same time snatching another, gave me a cut across the knuckles which I hardly

felt. I dashed out of the door into the clear sunlight. Someone was close behind, I knew not whom. Right in front, the doctor was pursuing his assailant down the hill, and just as

my eyes fell upon him, beat down his guard and sent him sprawling on his back with a great slash across the face.

“Round the house, lads! Round the house!” cried the captain; and even

in the hurly-burly, I perceived a change in his voice. Mechanically, I obeyed, turned eastwards, and with my cutlass

raised, ran round the corner of the house. Next moment I was face to face with Anderson. He roared aloud, and his hanger went up above his head, flashing in the sunlight. I had not time to be afraid, but as the blow still hung impending, leaped in a trice upon one side, and missing

my foot in the soft sand, rolled headlong down the slope.

When I had first sallied from the door, the other mutineers had been already swarming up the palisade to

make an end of us. One man, in a red night-cap, with his cutlass in his mouth, had even got upon the top and thrown a leg across. Well, so short had been the interval that when I found my feet again all was in the same posture, the fellow with the red night-cap still half-way over, another still just showing his head above the top of the stockade. And yet, in this breath of time, the fight was over and the victory was ours. Gray, following close behind me, had cut down the big boatswain ere he had time to recover from his last blow. Another had been shot at a loophole in the very act of firing into

the house and now lay in agony, the pistol still smoking in his hand. A third, as I had seen, the doctor had disposed of at a blow. Of the four who had scaled the palisade, one only remained unaccounted for, and he, having left his cutlass on the field, was now clambering out again with the fear of death upon him.

“Fire—fire from the house!” cried the doctor. “And you, lads, back into cover.”

But his words were unheeded, no shot was fired, and the last boarder made good his escape and disappeared with the rest into the wood. In three seconds nothing

remained of the attacking party but the five who had fallen, four on the inside and one on the outside of the palisade.

The doctor and Gray and I ran full speed for shelter. The survivors would soon be back where they had left their muskets, and at any moment the fire might recommence.

The house was by this time somewhat cleared of smoke, and we saw at a glance the price we had paid for victory. Hunter lay beside his loophole, stunned; Joyce by his, shot through the head, never to move again; while right in the centre, the squire was supporting the captain, one as pale as the other.

"The captain's wounded," said Mr. Trelawney.

"Have they run?" asked Mr. Smollett.

"All that could, you may be bound," returned the doctor; "but there's five of them will never run again." "Five!" cried the captain. "Come, that's better. Five against three leaves us four to nine. That's better odds than we had at starting. We were seven to nineteen then, or thought we were, and that's as bad to bear."\*

\*The mutineers were soon only eight in number, for the man shot by Mr.

Trelawney on board the schooner died that same evening of his wound. But this was, of course, not known till after by the faithful party.

# Chapter 21

## Die aanval

Net sodra as Silver uit die gesig was, draai die kaptein, wat hom noukeurig dopgehou het, skielik om na die binnekant van die blokhuis toe, en hy vind nie een van ons op sy pos nie, behalwe Gray. Dit was die eerste maal wat ons hom ooit kwaad gesien het.

Op julle poste! bulder hy.

Ons vlieg almal terug na ons plekke toe. Gray, sê die kaptein, ek sal jou naam in die dagboek sit; jy het jou plig gedoen soos n seeman. Mnr. Trelawney, ek is verwonder oor u. Dokter, ek dog dan u het die koning se uniform gedra! As dit die manier is waarop u by Fontenoy geveg het, kon u maar liewers in die bed gebly het.

Die dokter se wag staan weer almal by die skietgate, die ander laai gewere so vinnig as hulle kan, en almal is rooi in die gesig.

Die kaptein staan ons n rukkie stil en toekyk. Toe sê hy: „Manne, ek het Silver n doodhou gegee. Ek het dit met opset so erg gemaak as wat ek kon. Voor die uur om is sal hulle ons aanval, dit het hy self gesê. Hulle is meer as ons in getal; maar ons veg onder beskutting; en n minuut gelede sou ek daarby gevoeg het, ons veg onder krygstug. Ek twyfel daar hoegenaamd nie aan nie, of ons kan hulle baas raak, as julle net wil.

Toe stap hy van die een pos na die ander, en kyk of alles agtermekaar is. Aan die twee kort kante van die huis Oos en Wes, was daar net twee skietgate; aan die Suidekant waar die portaal was, weer twee; en aan die Noordekant, vyf. Daar het sowat n twintig gewere klaar gelaai gelê vir ons sewe.

Ons het die brandhout in vier hope opgestapel soos tafels, een teen die middel van elke muur aan, en op elke tafel lê n klomp ammunisie en vier gelaaide gewere, net klaar om te vat. In die middel lê die sabels.

Gooi die vuur dood, sê die kaptein. Die koue is verby, en ons kan nie met rook in die oë veg nie.

Mnr. Trelawney neem toe die ysterbak met vuur en al, en gaan dit buite in die sand versmoor.

Hawkins het nog nie geëet nie. Hawkins, help jou-self, en neem dit maar saam na jou pos toe. Eet maar goed, ou seun; jy sal dit nodig kry voor jou werk vandag klaar is. Hunter, gee vir elke man n slukkie brandewyn.

En solank as ons dit drink, lê die kaptein die ver-dedigingsplan uit.

Dokter, u neem die deur, sê hy. Pasop, moenie te veel in die gesig

kom nie. Bly binne, en skiet deur die portaal. Hunter, jy neem die Oostekant daar. Joyce, jy staan aan die Weste, ou seun. Mnr. Trelawney, u is die beste skutter; neem u en Gray hierdie lang Noordekant, met die vyf gate; die gevaar lê daar. As hulle daarby kan kom en ons beskiet deur ons eie skietgate, sal dit lelik lyk met ons. Hawkins jy en ek sal nie skiet nie; ons sal maar die gewere laai en aangee ..

Soos die kaptein gesê het, die koue was verby. Sodra as die son bokant die borne uitgeklim het, suig dit dadelik die newels op. Gougou was die sand soos n bakoond, en druk die harpuit uit die houtblokke van ons huis. Ons trek baadjies uit, knoop hemsboordjies oop, en rol

moue op; en daar staan ons nou, elkeen op sy pos, koorsagtig van hitte en spanning.

n Voile uur het verbygegaan.

Mag die ongeluk hulle haal! brom die kaptein. Ek hou nie van so n vervelike stilte nie. Gray, fluit vir n windjie.

Op dieselfde oomblik vra Joyce:

As ek een van hulle sien, moet ek dan skiet, kaptein?

So het ek tog gesê, antwoord die kaptein.

Dankie, meneer, sê Joyce, met dieselfde kalme be-leefdheid.

Vir n tydlang het daar niks gebeur nie. Ons staan almal met die ore gespits om die geringste geluid op te vang, die skutters met hulle gewere gereed in die hand. Die kaptein staan in die middel van die blokhuis, met die lippe opmekaar gedruk, en n frons op die voorkop.

Meteens lig Joyce se geweer op en vuur. Die knal het nog nie weggesterf nie, of dit word van alkante beantwoord deur die geknetter van skote, een na die ander, soos n trop ganse wat lande toe stap. Verskeie koeëls het die blokhuis getref, maar nie een het deurgekom nie; en toe die rook wegtrek, lyk die bos rondom die omheining weer net so stil en verlate soos voorheen. Daar roer nie n tak nie, nêrens blink n geweerloop om die nabyheid van ons vyande te verrai nie.

Het jy die man geraak? vra die kaptein.

Nee, meneer se Joyce. Ek glo nie, meneer.

Dit klink ten minste na n eerlike antwoord, brom kaptein Smollett. Laai sy geweer, Hawkins. Hoeveel skat u, was daar aan u kant, dokter?

,Ek weet presies, sê Dr. Livesey. Drie skote aan hierdie kant. Ek het die drie flitse gesien, twee naby mekaar, en een verder na die Weste toe.

,Drie! En hoeveel aan u kant, Mnr. Trelawney?

Maar dit kon nie so gemaklik beantwoord word nie. Daar het ten minste sewe of agt skote van die Noordekant af gekom. Uit die Ooste en Weste het daar net een skoot gekom. Dit was duidelik dat die

aanval uit die Noorde sou kom, en dat ons van die ander drie kante af sommer net sou besig gehou word om ons aandag af te trek. Maar Kaptein Smollett het geen verandering gemaak in sy planne nie.

As die muiters eers oor die heining kom, sê hy, sou hulle besit neem van elke onbewaakte skietgat, en hulle sou ons plaskiet soos rotte in ons eie fort.

Daar was nie baie tyd om te dink nie. Skielik, met n harde hoera, spring n klomp seerowers tussen die bome uit aan die Noordekant, en storm reg op die blokhuis af. Op dieselfde oomblik begin die skietery uit die bosse ook weer, en n koeël fluit deur die voorportaal, en slaan die dokter se geweer aan flenters in sy hande. Die aanvallers klouter soos ape oor die omheining. Die squire en Gray het geskiet, en nog n maal geskiet; drie man val, een vooroor binne die omheining, twee aan die buitekant. Maar van hierdie twee, het een meer verskrik as gewond gelyk, want hy was gou weer op sy voete, en het tussen die bome in verdwyn.

Twee het in die stof gebyt, een het gevlug, vier het tot binne ons versterking gekom; en onder beskutting van die bome hou sewe of agt man nog gedurig aan met skiet op die fort, al was die meeste daarvan mis.

Die vier wat oorgeklim het, kom reg op die blokhuis af, en hulle skree so wat hulle kan, en hulle maats onder die bome skree saam om hulle aan te moedig. Verskeie van ons het geskiet, maar dit moes alles so vinnig gaan, dat daar seker niemand geraak is nie.

In n oogwink was die vier rowers op ons lyf. Voor die middelste skietgat verskyn die kop van Job Anderson, die bootsman.

Pak hulle, almal tesaam! donder hy.

Op dieselfde oomblik gryp een van die ander rowers Hunter se geweer aan die loop, ruk dit uit sy hande, en gee die arme kerel so n hou dat hy bewusteloos op die grond val. Ondertussen het n derde ongehinderd om die huis gehardloop, en skielik in die deur verskyn, waar hy die dokter met sy sabel aanval.

Die toestand was nou heeltemal verander. n Oomblik tevore nog het ons onder beskutting gevuur op n onge-dekte vyand; nou lê ons oop en bloot, en kon amper niks doen om ons te verdedig nie.

Die blokhuis was vol rook, en dit was onder die omstandighede ook maar ons geluk. My ore het getuit van die geskree en geraas. Tussen die pistoolskote deur, hoor ek een aaklige, harde gil.

Uit, kerels, uit, ons sal hulle in die ope lug veg! Sabelsi skree die kaptein.

Ek gryp n sabel van die tafel af, en op dieselfde oomblik gryp iemand anders ook een, waardeur hy my n hou oor die kneukels gee, wat ek op die oomblik skaars gevoel het. Ek storm by die deur uit, en die ope lug in. Iemand anders was kort agter my, ek weet nie wie nie.



Reg voor my jaag die dokter agter die man wat hom aangeval het, en net toe ek hom in die oog kry, gee hy die seerower n hou oor die gesig wat hom op sy rug in die sand laat rol.

Om die huis, kerele, om die huis! skree die kaptein; en selfs onder al die lawaai merk ek n verandering in sy stem.

Werktuiglik draai ek na die Oostekant toe, en hardloop, sabel in die hand, om die huis. n Oomblik daarna loop ek my vas teen Job Anderson. Hy brul van boosaardigheid, en sy sabel blink in die sonlig, toe hy dit oor sy kop swaai. Daar was nie tyd om bang te word nie. Voor die hou kon val, koes ek opsy, maar verloor my balans in die los sand, en rol die afdraand af tot onder.

Toe ek by die deur uitgehardloop het, was die ander seerowers al aan opklouter teen die heining. Een van hulle, n man met n rooi slaapmus op, wat sy sabel tussen sy tande vashou, was reeds bo, en het een been oorgegooi. Wei, so vinnig het alles gegaan, dat, toe ek weer op my voete staan, alles random my nog net so daar uitsien. Die kerele met die rooi slaapmus sit nog met een been oor die heining, en n ander een se kop steek net bokant die rand uit. En tog was in die een oomblik die stryd beslis en die oorwinning ons sn.

Gray, wat kort agter my was, het die groot bootsman neergeklap met die sabel, voor hy nog weer sy balans kon kry na die hou wat hy op my gemis het. Die tweede is voor een van die skietgate neergeskiet; die derde is deur die dokter afgemaai, soos ek self gesien het, en die vierde, die enigste van die vier wat oorgebly het, het sy sabel weggesmyt, en klouter nou weer terug oor die heining, met die doodsangs op sy gesig.

Skiet uit die blokhuis uit! skree die dokter, terug, maats, onder die dak in!

Maar niemand slaan ag op sy woorde nie, en so het die laaste van die vier ontsnap tussen die bosse in. Binne drie sekondes was daar niks te sien van ons aanvallers nie, behalwe die vyf wat gesneuwel het, vier aan die binnekant, en een aan die buitekant van die heining.

Die dokter en Gray en ek loop so hard as ons kan om onder dak te kom. Die wat oorgebly het, sou gou terug wees om hulle gewere te haal, en die skietery kon enige oomblik weer begin.

Die rook was teen die tyd al uit die blokhuis weggetrek, en ons sien dadelik teen watter prys ons die oorwinning behaal het. Hunter lê bedwelmd by sy skietgat; Joyce lê dood, deur die kop geskiet, en reg in die middel van die gebou staan die squire en die kaptein mekaar en vashou, die een net so bleek soos die ander. Die kaptein is gewond, se Mnr. Trelawney.

Het hulle gevlug? vra Mnr. Smollett.

Almal wat kon, se die dokter. Maar daar is vyf van hulle, wat nooit weer sal loop nie.

Vyf! sê die kaptein. Dis gaaf. Dit beteken ons is nou vier teen nege. Dis baie beter as toe ons begin het. Toe was ons sewe teen neëntien, of so het ons gedink, ten minste.

# PART FIVE

## My Sea Adventure

### Chapter 22

How My Sea Adventure Began THERE was no return of the mutineers—not so much as another shot out of the woods. They had “got their rations for that day,” as the captain put it, and we had the place to ourselves and a quiet time to overhaul the wounded and get dinner. Squire and I cooked outside in spite of the danger, and even outside we could hardly tell what we were at, for horror of the loud groans that reached us from the doctor’s patients.

Out of the eight men who had fallen in the action, only three still breathed—that one of the pirates who had been shot at the loophole, Hunter, and Captain Smollett; and of these, the first two were as good as dead; the mutineer indeed died under the doctor’s knife, and Hunter, do what we could, never recovered consciousness in this world. He lingered all day, breathing loudly like the old buccaneer at home in his apoplectic fit, but the bones of his chest had been crushed by the blow and his skull fractured in falling, and some time in the following night, without sign or sound, he went to his Maker.

As for the captain, his wounds were grievous indeed, but not dangerous. No organ was fatally injured. Anderson’s ball—for it was Job that shot him first—had broken his shoulder-blade and touched the lung, not badly; the second had only torn and displaced some muscles in the calf. He was sure to recover, the doctor said, but in the meantime, and

for weeks to come, he must not walk nor move his arm, nor so much as speak when he could help it.

My own accidental cut across the knuckles was a flea-bite. Doctor Livesey patched it up with plaster and pulled my ears for me into the bargain.

After dinner the squire and the doctor sat by the captain’s side awhile in consultation; and when they had talked to their hearts’ content, it being then a little past noon, the doctor took up his hat and pistols, girt on a cutlass, put the chart in his pocket, and with a musket over his shoulder crossed the

palisade on the north side and set off briskly through the trees.

Gray and I were sitting together at the far end of the block house, to be out of earshot of our officers consulting; and Gray took his pipe out of his mouth and fairly forgot to put it back again, so thunder-struck

he was at this occurrence.

"Why, in the name of Davy Jones," said he, "is Dr. Livesey mad?" "Why no," says I. "He's about the last of this crew for that, I take it." "Well, shipmate," said Gray, "mad he may not be; but if HE'S not, you mark my words, I am."

"I take it," replied I, "the doctor has his idea; and if I am right, he's going now to see Ben Gunn."

I was right, as appeared later; but in the meantime, the house being stifling hot and the little patch of sand inside the palisade ablaze with midday sun, I began to get another thought into my head, which was not by any means so right. What I began

to do was to envy the doctor walking in the cool shadow of the woods with the birds about him and the pleasant smell of the pines, while I sat grilling, with my clothes stuck to the hot resin, and so much blood about me and so many poor dead bodies lying all around that I took a disgust of the place that was almost as strong as fear.

All the time I was washing out the block house, and then washing up the things from dinner, this disgust and envy kept growing stronger and stronger, till at last, being near a bread-bag, and no one then observing me, I took the first step towards my escapade and filled both pockets of my coat with biscuit.

I was a fool, if you like, and

certainly I was going to do a foolish, over-bold act; but I was determined to do it with all the precautions in my power. These biscuits, should anything befall me, would keep me, at least, from starving till far on in the next day.

The next thing I laid hold of was a brace of pistols, and as I already had a powder-horn and bullets, I felt myself well supplied with arms.

As for the scheme I had in my head, it was not a bad one in itself. I was to go down the sandy spit that divides the anchorage on the east from the open sea, find the white rock I had observed last evening, and ascertain whether it was there or not that Ben Gunn had hidden his boat, a thing quite worth doing, as I still believe. But as I was certain I should not be allowed to leave the

enclosure, my only plan was to take French leave and slip out when nobody was watching, and that was so bad a way of doing it as made the thing itself wrong. But I was only a boy, and I had made my mind up. Well, as things at last fell out, I found an admirable opportunity. The squire and Gray were busy helping the captain with his bandages, the coast was clear, I made a bolt for it over the stockade and into the thickest of the trees, and before my absence was observed I was out of cry of my companions.

This was my second folly, far worse than the first, as I left but two sound

men to guard the house; but like the first, it was a help towards saving all of us.

I took my way straight for the east coast of the island, for I was determined to go down the sea side of the spit to avoid all chance of observation from the anchorage. It was already late in the afternoon, although still warm and sunny. As I continued to thread the tall woods, I could hear from far before me not only the continuous thunder of the surf, but a certain tossing of foliage and grinding of boughs which showed me the sea breeze had set in higher than usual.

Soon cool

draughts of air began to reach me, and a few steps farther I came forth into the open borders of the grove, and saw the sea lying blue and sunny to the horizon and the surf tumbling and tossing its foam along the beach. I have never seen the sea quiet round Treasure Island. The sun might blaze overhead, the air be without a

breath, the surface smooth and blue, but still these great rollers would be running along all the external coast, thundering and thundering by day and night; and I scarce believe there is one spot in the island where a man would be out of earshot of their noise.

I walked along beside the surf with great enjoyment, till, thinking I was now got far enough to the south, I took the cover of some thick bushes and crept warily up to the ridge of the spit.

Behind me was the sea, in front the anchorage. The sea breeze, as though it had the sooner blown itself out by its unusual violence, was already at an end; it had been succeeded by light, variable airs from the south

and south-east, carrying great banks of fog; and the anchorage, under lee of Skeleton Island, lay still and leaden as when first we entered it. The HISPANIOLA, in that unbroken

mirror, was exactly portrayed from the truck to the waterline, the Jolly Roger hanging from her peak. Alongside lay one of the gigs, Silver in the stern-sheets—him I could always recognize—while a couple of men were leaning over the stern bulwarks, one of them with a red

cap—the very rogue that I had seen some hours before stride-legs upon the palisade. Apparently they were talking and laughing, though at that distance—upwards of a mile—I could, of course, hear no word of what was said. All at once there began the most horrid, unearthly screaming, which at first startled me

badly, though I had soon remembered the voice of Captain Flint and even thought I could make out the bird by her bright plumage as she sat perched upon her master's wrist.

Soon after, the jolly-boat shoved off and pulled for shore, and the man

with the red cap and his comrade went below by the cabin companion. Just about the same time, the sun had gone down behind the Spy-glass, and as the fog was collecting rapidly, it began to grow dark in earnest. I saw

I must lose no time if I were to find the boat that evening.

The white rock, visible enough

above the brush, was still some eighth of a mile further down the spit, and it took me a goodish while to get up with it, crawling, often on all fours, among the scrub. Night had almost come when I laid my hand on its rough sides. Right below it there was an exceedingly small hollow of green turf, hidden by banks and a thick underwood about knee-deep, that grew there very plentifully; and in the centre of the dell, sure enough, a little tent of goatskins, like what the gipsies carry about with them in England.

I dropped into the hollow, lifted the side of the tent, and there was Ben

Gunn's boat—home-made if ever anything was home-made; a rude, lop-sided framework of tough wood, and stretched upon that a covering of goatskin, with the hair inside. The thing was extremely small, even for me, and I can hardly imagine that it could have floated with a full-sized man. There was one thwart set as low as possible, a kind of stretcher in the bows, and a double paddle for propulsion.

I had not then seen a coracle, such as the ancient Britons made, but I have seen one since, and I can give you no fairer idea of Ben Gunn's boat than by saying it was like the first and the

worst coracle ever made by man. But the great advantage of the coracle it certainly possessed, for it was exceedingly light and portable. Well, now that I had found the boat, you would have thought I had had enough of truantry for once, but in the meantime I had taken another notion and become so obstinately

fond of it that I would have carried it out, I believe, in the teeth of Captain Smollett himself. This was to slip

out under cover of the night, cut the HISPANIOLA adrift, and let her go ashore where she fancied. I had quite made up my mind that the mutineers, after their repulse of the

morning, had nothing nearer their hearts than to up anchor and away to sea; this, I thought, it would be a fine thing to prevent, and now that I had seen how they left their watchmen unprovided with a boat, I thought it might be done with little risk.

Down I sat to wait for darkness, and made a hearty meal of biscuit. It was a night out of ten thousand for my purpose. The fog had now buried all heaven. As the last rays of daylight dwindled and disappeared, absolute blackness settled down on Treasure Island. And

when, at last, I shouldered the coracle and groped my way stumblingly out of the hollow where I had supped, there were but two points visible on the whole anchorage.

One was the great fire on shore, by which the defeated pirates lay carousing in the swamp. The other, a mere blur of light upon the darkness, indicated the position of the anchored ship. She had swung round to the ebb—her bow was now towards me—the only lights on board were in the cabin, and what I saw was merely a reflection on the fog of the strong rays that flowed from the stern window.

The ebb had already run some time, and I had to wade through a long belt

of swampy sand, where I sank several times above the ankle, before I came to the edge of the retreating water, and wading a little way in, with some strength and dexterity, set my coracle, keel downwards, on the surface.

DEEL V: MY AVONTUUR OP SEE

# Chapter 22

## Hoe my avontuur op see begin het

Die muiters het nie teruggekom nie, daar het ook nie een skoot meer geval nie. Hulle het genoeg vir die dag gehad en ons kon op ons gemak die gewondes versorg en ons ete klaarmaak. Die squire en ek het buite gekook, ten spyte van die gevaar, en selfs daar het die gekerm van die dokter se pasiënte deur murg en been gegaan.

Van die agt man wat gewond was, het net drie nog asem gehaal, die een seerower wat voor die skietgat geval het, Hunter, en Kaptein Smollett. Die rower het onder die dokter se mes gesterf, en Hunter het nooit weer bygekom nie. Sy borsbeen was inmekaar gestamp en sy kopbeen was gebars. Sonder enige teken of geluid het hy gesterf.

Die kaptein se wonde was ernstig, maar nie gevaarlik nie. Anderson se koeël het sy skouerbeen gebreek, en die long effens geraak; n tweede koeël het n paar spiere in sy kuit geskeur. Die dokter sê hy sou seker genees, maar hy sou weke lank moet rus, en so min praat as moontlik.

My eie wond oor die kneukels was niks meer as n vlooibyt nie. Dokter Livesey het daar n pleister opgesit, en toe nog boonop my ore getrek.

Na die ete het die squire en die dokter n tydjie lank by die kaptein gesit en praat, en toe hulle klaar was, so n rukkie na die middag, het die dokter sy hoed en pistole gevat, n sabel in sy lyfband gesteek, en die kaart

in sy sak; en toe, met n geweer oor sy skouer, klim hy oor die heining aan die Noordekant, en stap vinnig weg tussen die bome in.

Gray en ek het in die ander hoek van die blokhuis gaan sit, om so ver as moontlik van ons meerderes af verwyder te wees, terwyl hulle met mekaar praat. Gray neem sy pyp uit sy mond uit, en vergeet om dit weer in te sit, so groot was sy verbasing oor die ding wat hy daar sien gebeur.

Wel, in die naam van Davy Jones, sê hy, is Dr. Livesey gek?

Wel, nee, hy is seker die laaste van ons almal wat sal gek word, antwoord ek.

Nou ja, maat, sê Gray, as hy by sy voile verstand is, dan is ek dit nie.

Ek dink die dokter het n plan in sy kop. Dit sal my niks verwonder as hy Ben Gunn gaan opsoek nie.

Dit het later geblyk dat ek reg geraai het. Onder-tusseu was die blokhuis ondraaglik warm; die klein stukkie sandgrond binnekant die



omheining lê en bak in die middagson, en ek begin stadigaan n plan in my kop te kry, glad nie n verstandige plan nie. Ek het jaloers begin word op die dokter wat in die lekker koelte van die bome loop, met die voëls rondom hom, en die heerlike geur van die dennebome, terwyl ek hier sit, half gebraai in die ondraaglike hitte, my klere vasgekleef aan die gesmelte harpui, en met soveel bloed en lyke om my heen. Daar kom n gevoel van afsku in my op wat byna sterker was as vrees.

En al die tyd, solank as ek die blokhuis uitskrop, en toe weer die skottelgoed was na die ete, word hierdie walging en afguns sterker. Ek kom by een van die sakke beskuit verby, en ongemerk maak ek my sakke vol. Die eerste stap van my avontuur was geneem!

Dit was dwaas en roekeloos, daardie plan van my, maar tog wou ek net soveel voorsorg neem as wat maar enigsins moontlik was. Daardie beskuit sou ten minste tot ver op die volgende dag hou.

Toe het ek gesorg om n paar pistole in hande te kry. Kruithoring en koeëls was reeds in my besit. Die plan wat ek in die kop had, was nie so sleg nie. Ek sou al langs die strook sand af loop, tussen die ankerplaas en die see, en die wit rots opsoek wat ek die vorige aand bespeur het, om uit te vind of dit daar was waar Ben Gunn sy skuit weggesteek het; en die plan was wel die moeite werd, dit dink ek vandag nog. Maar ek wis goed dat ek nooit sou toegelaat word om buitekant die omheining te gaan nie, en dit was son slegte begin dat dit die hele onderneming verkeerd gemaak het. Maar ek was nog maar n seun, en ek was nou eenmaal vasbeslote om te gaan.

Dit duur toe ook nie lank nie, of ek kry n goeie kans. Die squire en Gray was besig om die kaptein se wonde te verbind; niemand merk my op nie. Ek neem dadelik die loop dwars oor die paalheining en in die digste deel van die bosse in.

Dit was die tweede dwaasheid wat ek begaan het, en baie erger as die eerste, want ek het nou net twee gesonde mans agter gelaat om die blokhuis te bewaak. Maar, net soos die vorige avontuur, was dit tog n mid-del tot ons almal se redding later.

Ek loop reguit na de ooskus van die eiland toe, want ek wou graag aan die seekant van die stuk sand afgaan, so dat ek nie van die ankerplaas af gesien kon word nie. Dit was al laat in die agtermiddag, al was dit nog warm en het die son nog helder geskyn. Toe ek so tussen die hoë bome deurloop, kon ek daar ver voor my die branders hoor dreun, en die takke hoor kreun en skud in die bries. Ek begin nou die koel seelug te kry, en n paar stappe verder kom ek aan die soom van die bos,

en voor my lê die see, blou en blink in die son, met golwe wat baljaar en wit skuim oor die sand uitstoot.

Ek het die see nooit kalm gesien random Skateiland nie. Al gloei die son, en al trek daar ook nie n luggie nie, tog kom daardie groot branders al langs die strand aan gedonder, dag en nag deur. Ek glo nie daar is n plekkie op die eiland waar n mens die geraas nie kan hoor nie.

Die wandeling langs die strand af was heerlik. Toe ek nou reken dat ek ver genoeg na die Suidekant geloop het, gaan ek weer onder die bosse in, en kruip versigtig die landtong op.

Agter my lê die see, voor my die ankerplaas. Die seewindjie, asof dit uitgeput was deur sy buitengewone heftigheid, het nou gaan lê; daar waai nou ligte, ver-anderlike windvlagies, van die Suide en Suidooste, wat groot misbanke saambring. Die ankerplaas lê stil en efd'e net soos ons dit die eerste maal gesien het. Die Hispaniola gee n duidelike weerkaatsing in daardie helder spieël, van die waterlyn af tot by die puntjie van die mas met die Jolly Roger daaraan.

Langsaan lê een van die sloepe, met Silver daarin, vir hom kon ek altyd maklik herken, en n paar mans leun oor die agterstewe, een van hulle met n rooi mus op dieselfde skurk wat ek n paar uur gelede wyds-been oor die heining sien sit het.

Dit lyk of hulle lag en gesels, maar ek was meer as n myl van hulle af, en kon dus nie een woord uitmaak nie. Opeens hoor ek n aaklige, onaardse geskree, en ek het my so lam geskrik, voor ek die stem van Kaptein Flint herken, en die helder kleure van die papegaai se vere sien blink, waar hy op sy baas se arm sit.

Kort daarna het die boot weggetrek na die land toe, en toe gaan die man met die rooi mus en sy maat die kajuitstrap af na onder toe. Die son het net weggesak agter die Verkyker, en dit word nou vinnig donker. Ek moes gou maak as ek nog dieselfde aand Ben Gunn se skuit wou opsoek.

Die wit rots, wat ek bokant die bossies kon sien uitsteek, was nog sowat n agste van n myl verder af langs die landtong, en dit was byna nag toe ek eindelijk met my hand teen die growwe klip stoot. Reg onder die rots was n holtetjie met groen gras begroei, en digte bossies daar rondom. In die middel daarvan staan n tentjie van bokvelle gemaak, soos die wat die sigeuners in Engeland met hulle saamdra.

Ek spring af in die holtetjie, lig die klap van die ou tentjie op, en daar was Ben Gunn se skuit, selfgemaak, dit was duidelik. Dit was n growwe, skewe raam van taai hout, oorgetrek met bokvel, met die hare aan die binnekant. Die ou dingetjie was baie klein, selfs vir my, en ek weet nie hoe op aarde dit met n grootmens sou gedryf het nie. Daar was n lae bankie in, n soort voet-plankie in die boeg, en twee roeispane lê binne in.

Ek het toe nog nie n kano gesien soos die wat die ou Britte van velle gemaak het nie, maar later het ek een gesien, en ek kan geen beter

beskrywing gee van Ben Gunn se skuit nie, as om te sê dat dit gelyk het soos die eerste en slegste kano wat menshande ooit gemaak het. Maar die groot voordeel van so 'n velbootjie is, dat dit so besonder lig is en maklik om te dra.

Nou dat ek die skuit gekry het, sou 'n mens dink dat ek vereers genoeg aan avontuur gehad het; maar nee, daar het al weer 'n nuwe plan in my opgekom, en ek was so ingenome daarmee, dat ek dit seker onder die oë van Kaptein Smollett sou uitgevoer het. Dit was, om onder beskerming van die duisternis die ankertoue van die Hispaniola te gaan lossny, sodat dit ęrens op die strand kon vasloop. Ek was seker dat die muiters na hulle neer-laag niks beters sou verlang nie as om die anker te lig

en die see in te vaar; en dink toe dit sou 'n baie mooi plan wees om dit te verhinder. Noudat ek gesien het hoedat hulle wagte sonder boot agtergelaat was, het dit vir my nie gevaarlik gelyk om dit uit te voer nie.

Ek het weer gaan sit om te wag vir die nag, en eet solank 'n paar stukke van my beskuit. Dit was net die regte soort nag vir my onderneming. Die lug was nou heeltemal toegetrek. Toe die daglig verdwyn, word dit stikdonker oor Skateiland. En toe ek eindelijk die ou bootjie oor my skouer gooi, en val-val daarmee uit die holtetjie uitklouter, was daar in die hele ankerplaas maar net twee dinge sigbaar: een was die groot vuur op die strand, waarby die seerowers lê en drink, na hulle neer-laag van die dag. Die ander, 'n flou ligstrepie in die duisternis, wys die plek aan waar die skip geanker lê. Die enigste lig aan boord was in die kajuit; en die lig wat ek sien, was maar 'n weerkaatsing deur die mis van die sterk ligstrale wat deur die venster in die agterstewe val.

Dit was laagwater, en ek moes deur 'n breë strook nat sand loop waar ek party keer tot by die enkel insak, voor ek aan die kant van die water kom, wat al hoe meer agteruit trek. Eindelijk sit ek my kano met die kiel na onder toe, op die water neer.

# Chapter 23

## The Ebb-tide Runs

THE coracle—as I had ample reason to know before I was done with her—

—was a very safe boat for a person of my height and weight, both buoyant and clever in a sea-way; but she

was the most cross-grained, lop-sided craft to manage. Do as you pleased, she always made more leeway than anything else, and turning round and round was the manoeuvre she was best at. Even Ben Gunn himself has admitted that she was “queer to handle till you knew her way.”

Certainly I did not know her way. She turned in every direction but the one I was bound to go; the most part of the time we were broadside on, and I am very sure I never should have made the ship at all but for the tide. By good fortune, paddle as I pleased, the tide was still sweeping me down; and there lay the HISPANIOLA right in the fairway,

hardly to be missed.

First she loomed before me like a blot of something yet blacker than darkness, then her spars and hull began to take shape, and the next moment, as it seemed (for, the farther I went, the brisker grew the current of the ebb), I was alongside of her hawser and had laid hold.

The hawser was as taut as a

bowstring, and the current so strong she pulled upon her anchor. All round the hull, in the blackness, the rippling current bubbled and chattered like a little mountain stream. One cut with my sea-gully and the HISPANIOLA would go

humming down the tide.

So far so good, but it next occurred

to my recollection that a taut hawser, suddenly cut, is a thing as dangerous as a kicking horse. Ten to one, if I were so foolhardy as to cut the HISPANIOLA from her anchor, I

and the coracle would be knocked clean out of the water.

This brought me to a full stop, and if fortune had not again particularly favoured me, I should have had to abandon my design. But the light airs which had begun blowing from the south-east and south had hauled

round after nightfall into the southwest. Just while I was meditating, a puff came, caught the HISPANIOLA, and forced her up into the current; and to my great joy, I felt the hawser slacken in my grasp,

and the hand by which I held it dip for a second under water.

With that I made my mind up, took out my gully, opened it with my teeth, and cut one strand after another, till the vessel swung only by two. Then I lay quiet, waiting to sever these last when the strain should be once more lightened by a breath of wind.

All this time I had heard the sound of loud voices from the cabin, but to

say truth, my mind had been so entirely taken up with other thoughts that I had scarcely given ear. Now, however, when I had nothing else to do, I began to pay more heed.

One I recognized for the coxswain's, Israel Hands, that had been Flint's gunner in former days. The other was, of course, my friend of the red

night-cap. Both men were plainly the worse of drink, and they were still drinking, for even while I was listening, one of them, with a drunken cry, opened the stern window and threw out something, which I divined to be an empty bottle. But they were not only tipsy; it was plain that they were furiously

angry. Oaths flew like hailstones, and every now and then there came forth such an explosion as I thought was sure to end in blows. But each time the quarrel passed off and the voices grumbled lower for a while, until the next crisis came and in its turn passed away without result.

On shore, I could see the glow of the great camp-fire burning warmly through the shore-side trees. Someone was singing, a dull, old, droning sailor's song, with a droop and a quaver at the end of every verse, and seemingly no end to it at all but the patience of the singer. I had heard it on the voyage more than

once and remembered these words: "But one man of her crew alive, What put to sea with seventy-five." And I thought it was a ditty rather too dolefully appropriate for a company that had met such cruel losses in the morning. But, indeed, from what I saw, all these buccaneers were as callous as the sea they sailed on.

At last the breeze came; the schooner sidled and drew nearer in the dark; I felt the hawser slacken once more, and with a good, tough effort, cut the last fibres through.

The breeze had but little action on the coracle, and I was almost instantly swept against the bows of the HISPANIOLA. At the same time, the schooner began to turn upon her heel, spinning slowly, end for end, across the current.

I wrought like a fiend, for I expected every moment to be swamped;

and since I found I could not push the coracle directly off, I now shoved straight astern. At length I was clear of my dangerous neighbour, and just as I gave the last impulsion, my hands came across a light cord that was trailing overboard across the stern bulwarks. Instantly I grasped it. Why I should have done so I can hardly say. It was at first mere

instinct, but once I had it in my hands and found it fast, curiosity began to get the upper hand, and I determined

I should have one look through the cabin window.

I pulled in hand over hand on the cord, and when I judged myself near enough, rose at infinite risk to about half my height and thus commanded the roof and a slice of the interior of the cabin.

By this time the schooner and her little consort were gliding pretty swiftly through the water; indeed,

we had already fetched up level with the camp-fire. The ship was talking, as sailors say, loudly, treading the

innumerable ripples with an incessant weltering splash; and until

I got my eye above the window-sill I could not comprehend why the watchmen had taken no alarm. One glance, however, was sufficient; and it was only one glance that I durst take from that unsteady skiff. It showed me Hands and his

companion locked together in deadly wrestle, each with a hand upon the other's throat.

I dropped upon the thwart again, none too soon, for I was near overboard. I could see nothing for the moment but these two furious, encrimsoned faces swaying together

under the smoky lamp, and I shut my eyes to let them grow once more familiar with the darkness.

The endless ballad had come to an end at last, and the whole diminished company about the camp-fire had broken into the chorus I had heard so often:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest— Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum! Drink and the devil had done for the rest— Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

I was just thinking how busy drink and the devil were at that very moment in the cabin of the HISPANIOLA, when I was surprised by a sudden lurch of the coracle. At the same moment, she yawed sharply and seemed to change her course. The speed in the meantime had strangely increased.

I opened my eyes at once. All round me were little ripples, combing over with a sharp, bristling sound and slightly phosphorescent. The HISPANIOLA herself, a few yards

in whose wake I was still being whirled along, seemed to stagger in her course, and I saw her spars toss a little against the blackness of the

night; nay, as I looked longer, I made sure she also was wheeling to the southward.

I glanced over my shoulder, and my heart jumped against my ribs. There, right behind me, was the glow of the camp-fire. The current had turned at right angles, sweeping round along with it the tall schooner and the little dancing coracle; ever quickening, ever bubbling higher, ever muttering louder, it went spinning through the narrows for the open sea.

Suddenly the schooner in front of me gave a violent yaw, turning, perhaps, through twenty degrees; and almost

at the same moment one shout followed another from on board; I could hear feet pounding on the companion ladder and I knew that the two drunkards had at last been interrupted in their quarrel and awakened to a sense of their disaster.

I lay down flat in the bottom of that wretched skiff and devoutly recommended my spirit to its Maker. At the end of the straits, I made sure we must fall into some bar of raging breakers, where all my troubles would be ended speedily; and though I could, perhaps, bear to die, I could not bear to look upon my fate as it approached.

So I must have lain for hours, continually beaten to and fro upon the billows, now and again wetted

with flying sprays, and never ceasing to expect death at the next plunge. Gradually weariness grew upon me;

a numbness, an occasional stupor, fell upon my mind even in the midst of my terrors, until sleep at last supervened and in my sea-tossed coracle I lay and dreamed of home and the old Admiral Benbow.

# Chapter 23

## Laagwater

Die kano, soos ek uitgevind het voordat ek daarmee klaar was was n baie veilige vaartuig en gou op die water. Maar dit was vreeslik balhorig as n mens dit wou stuur. Maak wat jy wil, dit draai maar al na die een kant toe om, en rondomtalie-speel was die kuns wat dit die beste verstaan bet. Ben Gunn het self later toegegee dat dit n bietjie lastig was om te stuur, tot n mens eers sy geaardheid ken.

Ek he sekerlik nie sy geaardheid geken nie. Dit draai na al kante toe om, behalwe die kant waarheen ek dit toevallig wil stuur. Ons het meeste van die tyd dwars geleë, en ek is seker dat ons nooit by die skip sou uitgekom het nie, as die stroom my nie reg teen die Hispaniola aan gespoel het nie.

Eers sien ek net n swart massa voor my, wat nog swarter lyk as die duisternis, toe kon ek die maste en romp uitmaak, en n oomblik daarna dryf ek vas teen die ankertou, en gryp dit met albei hande.

Die tou was so styf soos n boogpees gespan, so sterk het die skip aan die anker getrek. Rondom die skip, in die duisternis, sing en borrel die water soos n bergstroompie. Net een hou met my mes, en die Hispaniola sou vinnig stroom-af dryf. So ver, goed en wel; maar toe val dit my by dat n ankertou wat skielik deurgesny word, net so gevaarlik is as n perd wat skop. Tien teen een, as ek so roekeloos was om die Hispaniola los te sny, sou ek met kano en al uit die water uit geruk word.

Die gedagte laat my botstil sit in my vaartuigie, en as die geluk nie weer daarby gewees het nie, sou ek my plan moes opgee. Maar die wind wat eers uit die Suide en Suidooste gewaai het, draai nou reg Suidwes, Ek sit nog so en dink, toe daar n vlagie kom, die Hispaniola gryp, en dit stroom-op druk. Tot my blydschap voel ek die tou slapper word, sodat die hand, waarmee ek dit vashou, vir n oomblik onder die water glip.

Ek was dadelik klaar, gryp my mes, maak dit oop met my tande, en sny die een string na die ander af, totdat die skip nog net aan twee swaai. Toe lê ek stil en wag om die laaste twee deur te sny sodra daar weer n windvlagie kom.

Al die tyd het ek stemme gehoor van die kajuit se kant af, maar om die waarheid te se, was my kop so vol ander gedagtes, dat ek daar nie veel ag op geslaan het nie. Maar nou dat ek niks te doen het nie, begin ek te luister. Een van die stemme herken ek as die van Israel Hands,



wat kanonniker gewees het in Flint se dae. Die ander een was natuurlik my vriend met die rooi slaapmus op. Dit was duidelik dat albei reeds te diep in die bottel gekyk het, en hulle was nog aant drink; want toe ek nog so sit en luister, ruk een van die twee die venster oop, en gooi iets daaruit wat na n leë bottel lyk, en hy sê iets met die sleeptong van n dronk mens.

Maar hulle was nie alleen dronk nie, want ek kon duidelik hoor hoe hulle rusie maak. Die vloekwoorde val soos haelstene, en elke slag kom daar so n uitbarsting dat ek dink hulle gaan nou baklei. Maar iedere keer gaan die bui weer oor, en dan brom die stemme so n bietjie, tot die volgende krisis kom.

Op die strand kon ek die groot wagvure sien gloei tussen die bome deur. Iemand sing daar n eentonige ou seemansliedjie, wat klink of daar nooit n einde aan sou kom nie, of die geduld van die sanger moes opraak. Ek het dit meer as eenmaal op die seereis gehoor, en ek onthou die woorde goed:

Net een man is nog lewendig,  
En hul was vyf en sewentig.

Die liedjie het vir my treurig toepaslik geklink op n geselskap wat dieselfde more nog so n swaar verlies gely het. Maar, uit alles wat ek gesien het, lyk dit of die klomp seeskuimers net so ongevoelig was as die see waar hulle op vaar.

Eindelik kom die windjie; die skip kom nader in die donker; ek voel die tou word weer slap, en met een goeie hou sny ek die laaste stringe deur.

Die bries het maar min vat gehad op die kano, sodat ek byna oombliklik teen die kant van die Hispaniola aan stamp. Op dieselfde oomblik begin die skoener langsaam te swaai, en met die stroom af te dryf. Ek het soos n besetene gewerk; want iedere oomblik het ek verwag dat ek sou omgegooi word. Ek kon die kano nie dadelik van die skip af wegstoot nie, en skuif dit toe maar langsaan na die agterstewe se kant toe. Eindelik was ek los van my gevaar; en net toe ek die laaste stoot wou gee, raak my hand aan n tou wat oor die agterverskan-sing hang. Dadelik gryp ek dit vas.

Hoekom ek dit gedoen het kan ek self nie sê nie. Dit was blote instink; maar toe ek dit eenmaal in die hande het, en merk dat dit vassit, word ek al te nuuskierig, en ek besluit om net n slaggie deur die kajuit se venster te loer.

Ek hys my stadig, hand oor hand, op, en toe ek skat dat ek hoog genoeg was, waag ek dit om half orent te kom, sodat ek die solder en n stukkie van die kajuit kon sien.

Die skip en sy maatjie het taamluk vinnig deur die water gegly, sodat ons nou al regoor die kampvuur was. Die golfies plas hard teen die skoener aan, en voordat ek deur die venster geloer het, kon ek nie

verstaan hoekom die wagters nie onraad merk nie. Maar een oomblik was genoeg om te sien dat Hands en sy maat mekaar aan die keel beet het.

Ek val dadelik weer terug in my kano, en ook nie n oomblik te gou nie, want ek was amper oorboord. Ek kon niks anders voor my oë sien nie, as die twee boosaardige rooi gesigte onder die lig van die swaailamp, en ek maak my oë toe om weer gewoon te raak aan die duisternis.

Die eindelose deuntjie het nou tog n end gekry, en die hele geselskap om die vuur bulder die koor wat ek so dikwels gehoor het:

Vyftien man op die Dooie se kis,

Jo-ho-ho, en n bottel vol rum!

Vra Drank en die Duiwel waar die ander is, Jo-ho-ho, en n bottel vol rum!

Ek sit en dink hoe druk besig Drank en die Duiwel op die oomblik was in die kajuit van die Hispaniola, toe ek skrik van n skielike ruk wat die kano gee. Dit swaai om, en verander heeltemal van koers.

Ek maak my oe wyd oop. Orals rondom my was klein kabbelinkies wat n skerp gedruis maak, en fosfories blink. Ek dryf nog altyd agter die Hispaniola aan, en toe ek goed oplet, sien ek hoe die skip slinger, en die maste heen en weer ruk teen die duisternis van die nag. Ek was nou seker dat ons na die Suide toe dryf.

Ek kyk oor my skouer, en my hart klop in my keel. Daar, vlak agter my, brand die kampvuur. Die stroorn het n draai gemaak en altyd vinniger, met n harder geplas en gebruis, vaar die groot skoener en die klein ligte kano saam die wye see in.

Plotseling gee die skip daar voor my n geweldige swaai na eenkant toe, dit het seker goed n twintig grade omgedraai. Tegelykertyd kom daar n geskreeu van die vaartuig af: ek kon iemand die kajuitstrap hoor op hardloop; en ek wis dat die twee dronkaards eindelijk hulle rusie laat vaar het, en tot n besef gekom het van die gevaar waarin hulle verkeer.

Ek gaan plat lê op die boom van daardie armsalige ou skuitjie, en gee my siel oor in die hande van my Maker. Aan die uitgang van die nou seestraat sou ons tussen die woeste branders verval, en dan sou daar wel gou n einde kom aan my en al my moeite. Miskien sou ek moed genoeg he om te sterf as my uur daar is, maar om die dood so te le en af wag was meer as wat ek kon verdra.

Ek het seker urelank so gelê, heen en weer geslinger op die golwe, nou en dan waternat van die skuim wat oor my vlieg, en altyd met die verwagting dat die dood met die volgende golfslag sou kom.

Langsamerhand kry vermoeidheid die oorhand; n verlamming, n verdowing kom oor my gees, selfs onder al die verskriklike angs deur; totdat ek eindelijk aan slaap raak. In die ou kano, wat rond skommel

op die golwe, lê ek en droom van my huis en die ou Admiral Benbow.

# Chapter 24

## The Cruise of the Coracle

IT was broad day when I awoke and found myself tossing at the southwest end of Treasure Island. The sun was up but was still hid from me behind the great bulk of the Spy-glass, which on this side descended almost to the sea in formidable cliffs.

Haulbowline Head and Mizzenmast Hill were at my elbow, the hill bare and dark, the head bound with cliffs forty or fifty feet high and fringed with great masses of fallen rock. I was scarce a quarter of a mile to seaward, and it was my first thought to paddle in and land.

That notion was soon given over. Among the fallen rocks the breakers spouted and bellowed; loud reverberations, heavy sprays flying and falling, succeeded one another from second to second; and I saw myself, if I ventured nearer, dashed to death upon the rough shore or spending my strength in vain to scale the beetling crags.

Nor was that all, for crawling together on flat tables of rock or letting themselves drop into the sea with loud reports I beheld huge slimy monsters—soft snails, as it were, of incredible bigness—two or three score of them together, making

the rocks to echo with their barkings. I have understood since that they were sea lions, and entirely

harmless. But the look of them, added to the difficulty of the shore and the high running of the surf, was

more than enough to disgust me of that landing-place. I felt willing rather to starve at sea than to confront such perils.

In the meantime I had a better chance, as I supposed, before me. North of Haulbowline Head, the land runs in a long way, leaving at low tide a long stretch of yellow sand. To the north of that, again, there comes another cape—Cape of the Woods, as it was marked upon the chart—buried in tall green pines, which descended to the margin of the sea.

I remembered what Silver had said about the current that sets northward

along the whole west coast of Treasure Island, and seeing from my position that I was already under its influence, I preferred to leave Haulbowline Head behind me and reserve my strength for an attempt to land upon the kindlier-looking Cape of the Woods.

There was a great, smooth swell upon the sea. The wind blowing steady and gentle from the south, there was no contrariety between that and the current, and the billows rose and fell unbroken.

Had it been otherwise, I must long ago have perished; but as it was, it is surprising how easily and securely my little and light boat could ride. Often, as I still lay at the bottom and kept no more than an eye above the gunwale, I would see a big blue summit heaving close above me; yet the coracle would but bounce a

little, dance as if on springs, and subside on the other side into the trough as lightly as a bird.

I began after a little to grow very bold and sat up to try my skill at paddling. But even a small change in the disposition of the weight will produce violent changes in the behaviour of a coracle. And I had hardly moved before the boat, giving up at once her gentle dancing movement, ran straight down a slope of water so steep that it made me giddy, and struck her nose, with a spout of spray, deep into the side of the next wave.

I was drenched and terrified, and fell instantly back into my old position, whereupon the coracle seemed to find her head again and led me as softly as before among the billows. It was plain she was not to be interfered with, and at that rate,

since I could in no way influence her course, what hope had I left of reaching land?

I began to be horribly frightened, but

I kept my head, for all that. First,

moving with all care, I gradually baled out the coracle with my sea-cap; then, getting my eye once more above the gunwale, I set myself to study how it was she managed to slip so quietly through the rollers.

I found each wave, instead of the

big, smooth glossy mountain it looks from shore or from a vessel's deck, was for all the world like any range of hills on dry land, full of peaks and smooth places and valleys. The coracle, left to herself, turning from side to side, threaded, so to speak, her way through these lower parts and avoided the steep slopes and higher, toppling summits of the

wave.

"Well, now," thought I to myself, "it is plain I must lie where I am and not disturb the balance; but it is plain also that I can put the paddle over

the side and from time to time, in smooth places, give her a shove or two towards land." No sooner thought upon than done. There I lay on my elbows in the most trying attitude, and every now and again gave a weak stroke or two to turn her head to shore.

It was very tiring and slow work, yet I did visibly gain ground; and as we drew near the Cape of the Woods, though I saw I must infallibly miss

that point, I had still made some hundred yards of easting. I was, indeed, close in. I could see the cool green tree-tops swaying together in the breeze, and I felt sure I should make the next promontory without fail.

It was high time, for I now began to be tortured with thirst. The glow of the sun from above, its thousandfold reflection from the waves, the sea-water that fell and dried upon me, caking my very lips with salt, combined to make my throat burn and my brain ache. The sight of the trees so near at hand had almost made me sick with longing, but the current had soon carried me past the point, and as the next reach of sea opened out, I beheld a sight that changed the nature of my thoughts. Right in front of me, not half a mile away, I beheld the HISPANIOLA under sail. I made sure, of course, that I should be taken; but I was so distressed for want of water that I scarce knew whether to be glad or sorry at the thought, and long before I had come to a conclusion, surprise had taken entire possession of my mind and I could do nothing but stare and wonder.

The HISPANIOLA was under her main-sail and two jibs, and the beautiful white canvas shone in the sun like snow or silver. When I first sighted her, all her sails were drawing; she was lying a course about north-west, and I presumed the men on board were going round the island on their way back to the anchorage. Presently she began to fetch more and more to the westward, so that I thought they had sighted me and were going about in chase. At last, however, she fell right into the wind's eye, was taken dead aback, and stood there awhile helpless, with her sails shivering. "Clumsy fellows," said I; "they must still be drunk as owls." And I thought how Captain Smollett would have set them skipping.

Meanwhile the schooner gradually fell off and filled again upon another tack, sailed swiftly for a minute or so, and brought up once more dead

in the wind's eye. Again and again was this repeated. To and fro, up and down, north, south, east, and west, the HISPANIOLA sailed by swoops and dashes, and at each repetition ended as she had begun, with idly flapping canvas. It became plain to me that nobody was steering. And if so, where were the men? Either they were dead drunk or had deserted her, I thought, and perhaps if I could get on board I might return the vessel to her captain.

The current was bearing coracle and schooner southward at an equal rate. As for the latter's sailing, it was so wild and intermittent, and she hung each time so long in irons, that she certainly gained nothing, if she did not even lose. If only I dared to sit up and paddle, I made sure that I could overhaul her. The scheme had

an air of adventure that inspired me, and the thought of the water breaker beside the fore companion doubled my growing courage.

Up I got, was welcomed almost

instantly by another cloud of spray, but this time stuck to my purpose and set myself, with all my strength and caution, to paddle after the unsteered HISPANIOLA. Once I shipped a sea so heavy that I had to stop and bail, with my heart fluttering like a bird, but gradually I got into the way of

the thing and guided my coracle among the waves, with only now and then a blow upon her bows and a dash of foam in my face.

I was now gaining rapidly on the schooner; I could see the brass glisten on the tiller as it banged about, and still no soul appeared upon her decks. I could not choose

but suppose she was deserted. If not, the men were lying drunk below, where I might batten them down, perhaps, and do what I chose with the ship.

For some time she had been doing the worse thing possible for me—standing still. She headed nearly due south, yawing, of course, all the time. Each time she fell off, her sails partly filled, and these brought her in a moment right to the wind again. I have said this was the worst thing possible for me, for helpless as she looked in this situation, with the canvas cracking like cannon and the blocks trundling and banging on the

deck, she still continued to run away from me, not only with the speed of the current, but by the whole amount of her leeway, which was naturally great.

But now, at last, I had my chance. The breeze fell for some seconds, very low, and the current gradually turning her, the HISPANIOLA revolved slowly round her centre and at last presented me her stern, with the cabin window still gaping open and the lamp over the table still burning on into the day. The main-sail hung drooped like a banner. She was stock-still but for the current.

For the last little while I had even

lost, but now redoubling my efforts, I began once more to overhaul the chase.

I was not a hundred yards from her when the wind came again in a clap; she filled on the port tack and was off again, stooping and skimming

like a swallow.

My first impulse was one of despair, but my second was towards joy. Round she came, till she was broadside on to me—round still till she had covered a half and then two thirds and then three quarters of the distance that separated us. I could

see the waves boiling white under her forefoot. Immensely tall she looked to me from my low station in the coracle.

And then, of a sudden, I began to comprehend. I had scarce time to think—scarce time to act and save myself. I was on the summit of one swell when the schooner came stooping over the next. The bowsprit was over my head. I sprang to my feet and leaped, stamping the coracle under water. With one hand I caught the jib-boom, while my foot was lodged between the stay and the brace; and as I still clung there panting, a dull blow told me that the schooner had charged down upon and struck the coracle and that I was left without retreat on the HISPANIOLA.



# Chapter 24

## My tog in die kano

Dit was helder daglig toe ek wakkerskrik, en sien dat ek ronddryf aan die Suidweste-kant van Skateiland. Die son was al op, maar skuil nog weg agter die groot berg, die Verkyker, wat aan hierdie kant met sy steil kranse byna tot in die see afloop.

Haulbowline Head en Mizzenmast Hill lê aan die een kant; die heuwel kaal en donker, die ander vol klippe veertig tot vyftig voet hoog, en met groot stukke afge-brokkelde rots aan sy voet.

Ek was skaars n kwartmyl van die strand af, en my eerste gedagte was om soheentoe te roei en te land. Ek het daardie plan baie gou egter laat vaar. Tussen die rotsblokke kook en bruis die branders met n aanhou-dende gedonder; as ek dit waag om nader te gaan, sou ek verpletter word met kano en al.

Maar dit was nog nie al nie. Op n plat rotsblok sien ek groot, gladde monsters rondkruip, of met n geraas die see induik. Hulle lyk soos ontsaglike groot slakke, sestig of meer in getal, en die rotse weerklink van hulle geblaf.

Later het ek gehoor dat dit seeleus was, en glad nie gevaarlik nie. Maar op daardie oomblik het hulle vir my so walglik gelyk, dat ek lievers op see sou wou sterf van honger en dors, as om naby daardie goed uit te kom.

Aan die Noordekant van Haulbowline Head maak die see n inham, waardeur met laagwater n lang strook geel sand oop lê. Nog n bietjie verder Noord is daar n ander Kaap, Boskaap, soos dit op die kaart aangegee is. Dit is half begrawe onder hoë groen bome wat tot aan die waterkant groei.

Dit val my by wat Silver gepraat het van die stroom wat Noordwaarts al langs die weskus van Skateiland op loop. Ek kon sien uit die koers wat die kano neem dat ek reeds onder die invloed van die stroom was, en ek besluit toe om maar by Haulbowline Head verby te dryf, en my krag te spaar om te probeer land by die Boskaap, waar die branders nie so kwaai lyk nie.

Die seewater maak lang, stadige deininkies. Die Suide-windjie waai saggies, en die golwe rys en daal onaf-gebroke.

Was dit anders gewees, dan was ek lankal vergaan, maar dit was wonderlik hoe lig en gemaklik my ou skuitjie kon gly oor die water. Meer as een maal, as ek so stil lê op die boom, en oor die rand langs loer, sien ek n groot blou berg water hier vlak bokant my kop, maar die kano dans daaroor asof dit op vere loop en gly anderkant af so lig

soos n voëltyjie.

Na n tydjie word ek astant, en gaan regop sit om te probeer of ek kon roei. Maar die minste verandering in die gewig maak n groot verandering in die houding van n kano. Ek het skaars geroer of die bootjie hou op met dans, skiet regaf langs n hoë golf, so vinnig, dat ek duiselig word daarvan, en steek sy neus diep in die sy van die volgende golf in, sodat die skuim oor my spat.

Ek was papnat, en lam geskrik, en gaan weer dadelik plat le. Die kano kom weer tot bedaring, en wieg-wieg weer met my oor die golwe. Dit was duidelik dat ek die koers nie kon verander nie, en hoe sou ek nou ooit aan land kom?

Ek begin doodbenoud te word, maar behou tog my teenwoordigheid van gees. Eers het ek die water uitge-skep met my keps, so versigtig en saggies as moontlik; toe loer ek weer oor die rand, en probeer om uit te maak hoekom die skuit so maklik deur die golwe kon glip.

Ek sien toe dat elke golf, inplaas van n groot, effe berg te wees, soos dit van die land af lyk, kom heel net soos n ry heuwels op die land is, vol spits punte en gelyktes en laagtes. As die kano aan homself oorgelaat word, draai dit van kant tot kant, en soek vanself die lae plekkies uit, sodat dit die steiltes nooit hoef uit te klim nie.

Ja, nee, dink ek oe, ek sal moet bly le waar ek is, anders kantel die ding. Maar niks verhoed my om die roeispaan oor die kant te sit, en so nou en dan, by n gelyk plek, n paar trekke te gee na die land se kant toe nie.

So gesê, so gedaan. Daar lê ek toe op my elmboë, so ongemaklik as kan wees, en elke slag gee ek so n swak trekkie aan die roeispaan, om land se kant toe te werk.

Dit was baie vermoeiend, en het maar langsaam ge-gaan, en tog het ek n bietjie nader aan land gekom. Toe ek naby die Boskaap kom, kon ek merk dat ek n goeie ent meer Oos was as eers, al sou ek nie hier kon land nie. Die strand was digby. Ek kon die koel, groen boomtoppe sien swaai in die windjie, en ek was seker daarvan dat ek die volgende kaap sou bereik.

Dit was ook hoog tyd, want die dors begin my nou al net lelik te kwel. My keel het gebrand, en my harsings het geklop van dit hittige sonstrale oor my kop, en die weerkaatsing daarvan deur die golwe, en dan nog boon-op die seewater wat oor my spat, en droog word, sodat selfs my lippe hard was van die sout. Dit het my byna laat huil om daardie groen bome so naby te sien; maar die stroom het my gou daar verbygedryf; en toe ek om die draai kom, sien ek iets wat my heeltemal op ander gedagtes bring.

Reg voor my, minder as n halwe myl weg, le die Hispaniola onder seil. Nou word ek gevang, dink ek, maar ek was so dors dat ek nie wis of ek sou spyt wees, of bly wees, as dit gebeur nie. Maar toe sien ek

iets wat my so verwonder, dat ek net kon sit en kyk.

Die Hispaniola had die skoenerseil en twee kluiver-seile op, en die pragtige wit seildoek blink soos sneeu of silwer in die son. Toe ek die eerste maal die skip sien, was al die seile vol, en ek het gedink dat die twee mans aan boord om die eiland wou vaar, om weer op die ankerplaas uit te kom. Nou begin dit meer na die Weste te draai, en ek meen toe dat hulle my gesien het, en my wou agterna sit. Maar eindelijk draai dit reg teen die wind op, die skip bly botstil staan, en die seile klap rond.

Sulke onhandige goed! sê ek; Hulle is seker nog so dronk soos uile. En ek wens Kaptein Smollett was daar om hulle reg te maak.

Ondertussen draai die skoener stadig om, skep aan die ander kant wind, en seil vinnig weg, tot dit weer vlak teen die wind gaan lê. Oor en oor gebeur dieselfde ding. Op en af, heen en weer, noord, suid, oos, en wes, seil die Hispaniola met vaarte, en elke keer eindig dit soos dit begin het, met leë seile wat klap in die wind. Dit word vir my nou duidelik dat daar niemand aan die roer staan nie. Waar was die mans dan? Hulle moes smoordronk wees, of anders die skip verlaat het, en as

ek nou net aan boord kon kom, dan was daar n kans vir my om die skip terug te neem na die kaptein toe.

Die stroom dryf die kano en die skip ewe vinnig na die Suide. Die Hispaniola seil so ongereeld, en le so dikwels stil, dat ek dit maklik kon inhaal. As ek nou tog net kon regop sit om te roei! Die plan lyk so avon-tuurlik, dat dit my met geesdrif vervul, en die gedagte aan die watervaattie by die voortrap verdubbel my moed sommer.

Ek spring orent, en dadelik kry ek n skuimbad oor my lyf, maar die slag bly ek staan; en met al my krag begin ek agter die onbestuurde Hispaniola aan te roei. Een slag het ek soveel water geskep, dat ek moes stilhou om uit te skep, met n hart wat in my keel klop; maar stadigaan word ek die ding gewoond, en stuur my kano tussen die golwe deur, sodat ek maar selde n vlagie skuim in die gesig kry.

Ek was nou naby die skoener; ek kon die koper op die roerpen sien blink, soos dit heen en weer swaai, en nog verskyn daar niemand op dek nie. Dit lyk vir my of die skip verlate was. So nie, dan le die mans dronk in die kajuit, en kon ek hulle gemaklik daar toesluit, en dan met die skip doen wat ek wil.

Vir n tydlang lê die skip nou stil, iets wat my maar baie min aanstaan; want elke slag as dit omdraai in die stroom, vul die seile half met wind, en daardeur dryf die skip weer soveel vinniger van my af weg.

Maar eindelijk kom my kans tog. Die windjie het gaan le, en die Hispaniola draai langsaam om in die stroom, totdat die agterstewe na my toe was, met die kajuits-raam nog wyd oop. Die lamp bokant die

tafel brand ook nog in die daglig. Die grootseil hang slap soos n vlag.

Ek was nie honderd jaarts van die skip af nie, toe die wind weer met n ruk begin. Die seile vul, en daar gaan die Hispaniola, soos n swaweltjie oor die water!

Eers wou ek wanhopig word, maar toe, tot my grootste vreugde, kom die skip na my kant toe. Om swaai die groot vaartuig, om, tot dit met die flank na my toe le, en toe nog verder om, tot die helfte van die afstand tussen ons afgeleë was, toe twee derdes daarvan, toe driekwart. Ek kon die water sien kook onder die boeg. Hoe ontsaglik groot lyk die skip vir my van my lae sitplek in die kano af!

En toe, meteens, sien ek die gevaar van my posisie in. Ek het skaars tyd gehad om te dink skaars tyd om te handel en myself te red. Op die top van die een golf dans my kano, en die skoener kom oor die volgende een aan. Die boegspriet was reg oor my kop. Ek spring orent, en ek gryp met een hand na die boegspriet, terwyl my voet in die touwerk te lande kom. Ek hang nog daar so en hyg na asem, toe ek n dowwe geluid hoor wat my vertel dat die skoener die kano onder die water gestamp het, en dat ek nou sonder genade op die Hispaniola agtergelaat was.

# Chapter 25

## I Strike the Jolly Roger

I HAD scarce gained a position on the bowsprit when the flying jib flapped and filled upon the other tack, with a report like a gun. The schooner trembled to her keel under the reverse, but next moment, the other sails still drawing, the jib flapped back again and hung idle. This had nearly tossed me off into the sea; and now I lost no time, crawled back along the bowsprit, and tumbled head foremost on the deck.

I was on the lee side of the forecastle, and the main-sail, which was still drawing, concealed from me a certain portion of the after-deck. Not a soul was to be seen. The planks, which had not been swabbed since the mutiny, bore the print of many feet, and an empty bottle, broken by the neck, tumbled to and fro like a live thing in the scuppers. Suddenly the HISPANIOLA came right into the wind. The jibs behind me cracked aloud, the rudder slammed to, the whole ship gave a sickening heave and shudder, and at the same moment the main-boom

swung inboard, the sheet groaning in the blocks, and showed me the lee after-deck.

There were the two watchmen, sure enough: red-cap on his back, as stiff as a handspike, with his arms stretched out like those of a crucifix and his teeth showing through his open lips; Israel Hands propped against the bulwarks, his chin on his chest, his hands lying open before him on the deck, his face as white, under its tan, as a tallow candle.

For a while the ship kept bucking and sidling like a vicious horse, the sails filling, now on one tack, now on another, and the boom swinging to and fro till the mast groaned aloud under the strain. Now and again too there would come a cloud of light sprays over the bulwark and a heavy blow of the ship's bows against the swell; so much heavier weather was made of it by this great rigged ship than by my home-made, lop-sided coracle, now gone to the bottom of the sea.

At every jump of the schooner, red-cap slipped to and fro, but—what was ghastly to behold—neither his

attitude nor his fixed teeth-disclosing grin was anyway disturbed by this rough usage. At every jump too, Hands appeared still more to sink into himself and settle down upon the deck, his feet sliding ever the farther out, and the whole body canting towards the stern, so that his face became, little by little, hid from me; and at last I could see

nothing beyond his ear and the frayed ringlet of one whisker. At the same time, I observed, around both of them, splashes of dark blood upon the planks and began to feel sure that they had killed each other in their drunken wrath.

While I was thus looking and wondering, in a calm moment, when the ship was still, Israel Hands turned partly round and with a low moan writhed himself back to the position in which I had seen him first. The moan, which told of pain and deadly weakness, and the way in which his jaw hung open went right

to my heart. But when I remembered the talk I had overheard from the apple barrel, all pity left me.

I walked aft until I reached the main-mast.

"Come aboard, Mr. Hands," I said ironically.

He rolled his eyes round heavily, but he was too far gone to express surprise. All he could do was to utter one word, "Brandy."

It occurred to me there was no time

to lose, and dodging the boom as it once more lurched across the deck, I slipped aft and down the companion stairs into the cabin.

It was such a scene of confusion as you can hardly fancy. All the lockfast places had been broken open in quest of the chart. The floor was thick with mud where ruffians had sat down to drink or consult after wading in the marshes round their camp. The bulkheads, all painted in clear white and beaded round with gilt, bore a pattern of dirty hands. Dozens of empty bottles clinked together in corners to the rolling of the ship. One of the

doctor's medical books lay open on the table, half of the leaves gutted out, I suppose, for pipelights. In the midst of all this the lamp still cast a smoky glow, obscure and brown as umber.

I went into the cellar; all the barrels were gone, and of the bottles a most surprising number had been drunk out and thrown away. Certainly, since the mutiny began, not a man of them could ever have been sober. Foraging about, I found a bottle with some brandy left, for Hands; and for myself I routed out some biscuit, some pickled fruits, a great bunch of raisins, and a piece of cheese. With

these I came on deck, put down my own stock behind the rudder head and well out of the coxswain's reach, went forward to the water-breaker, and had a good deep drink of water, and then, and not till then, gave

Hands the brandy.

He must have drunk a gill before he took the bottle from his mouth. "Aye," said he, "by thunder, but I wanted some o' that!"

I had sat down already in my own corner and begun to eat.

"Much hurt?" I asked him.

He grunted, or rather, I might say, he barked.

"If that doctor was aboard," he said,

"I'd be right enough in a couple of turns, but I don't have no manner of luck, you see, and that's what's the matter with me. As for that swab,

he's good and dead, he is," he added, indicating the man with the red cap. "He warn't no seaman anyhow. And where mought you have come from?" "Well," said I, "I've come aboard to take possession of this ship, Mr. Hands; and you'll please regard me

as your captain until further notice." He looked at me sourly enough but said nothing. Some of the colour had come back into his cheeks, though he still looked very sick and still continued to slip out and settle down

as the ship banged about.

"By the by," I continued, "I can't have these colours, Mr. Hands; and by your leave, I'll strike 'em. Better none than these."

And again dodging the boom, I ran to the colour lines, handed down their cursed black flag, and chucked it overboard.

"God save the king!" said I, waving my cap. "And there's an end to Captain Silver!"

He watched me keenly and slyly, his chin all the while on his breast.

"I reckon," he said at last, "I reckon, Cap'n Hawkins, you'll kind of want to get ashore now. S'pose we talks."

"Why, yes," says I, "with all my heart, Mr. Hands. Say on." And I went back to my meal with a good appetite.

"This man," he began, nodding feebly at the corpse—"O'Brien were his name, a rank Irishman—this man and me got the canvas on her, meaning for to sail her back. Well, HE'S dead now, he is—as dead as bilge; and who's to sail this ship, I don't see. Without I gives you a hint, you ain't that man, as far's I can tell. Now, look here, you gives me food and drink and a old scarf or ankecher to tie my wound up, you do, and I'll tell you how to sail her, and that's about square all round, I take it."

"I'll tell you one thing," says I: "I'm not going back to Captain Kidd's anchorage. I mean to get into North Inlet and beach her quietly there." "To be sure you did," he cried. "Why, I ain't sich an infernal lubber after all. I can see, can't I? I've tried my fling, I have, and I've lost, and it's you has the wind of me. North

Inlet? Why, I haven't no ch'ice, not I! I'd help you sail her up to Execution Dock, by thunder! So I would."

Well, as it seemed to me, there was some sense in this. We struck our

bargain on the spot. In three minutes

I had the HISPANIOLA sailing easily before the wind along the coast of Treasure Island, with good hopes of turning the northern point ere noon and beating down again as far as North Inlet before high water, when we might beach her safely and wait till the subsiding tide permitted us to land.

Then I lashed the tiller and went below to my own chest, where I got a soft silk handkerchief of my

mother's. With this, and with my aid, Hands bound up the great bleeding stab he had received in the thigh, and after he had eaten a little and had a swallow or two more of the brandy,

he began to pick up visibly, sat straighter up, spoke louder and clearer, and looked in every way another man.

The breeze served us admirably. We skimmed before it like a bird, the coast of the island flashing by and

the view changing every minute. Soon we were past the high lands and bowling beside low, sandy country, sparsely dotted with dwarf pines, and soon we were beyond that again and had turned the corner of

the rocky hill that ends the island on the north.

I was greatly elated with my new command, and pleased with the bright, sunshiny weather and these different prospects of the coast. I had now plenty of water and good things to eat, and my conscience, which had smitten me hard for my desertion,

was quieted by the great conquest I had made. I should, I think, have had nothing left me to desire but for the eyes of the coxswain as they followed me derisively about the deck and the odd smile that appeared continually on his face. It was a

smile that had in it something both of pain and weakness—a haggard old man's smile; but there was, besides that, a grain of derision, a shadow of treachery, in his expression as he

craftily watched, and watched, and watched me at my work.



# Chapter 25

## Ek trek die Swart Vlag af

Skaars was ek op die boegspriet geklim, of die klui-werseil klap en keer om na die ander kant toe, met n knal soos n kanonskoot. Die skoener het tot in sy kiel getril onder die skok, maar die volgende oomblik, omdat die ander seile nog trek, slaan die kluiwer weer terug en hang toe slap.

Dit het my byna afgestamp in die see in; en ek het nou geen oomblik gewag nie, maar met die boegspriet langs gekruip, en halsoorkop die dek opgerol.

Ek was aan die ly-kant van die voorskip, en die groot seil, wat nog altyd trek, het n stuk van die agterdek vir my verberg. Daar was geen lewendige siel te sien nie. Die planke, wat van die muitery af nog nooit geskrop was nie, was vol vuil spore en n leë bottel, met die nek afgeslaan, rol been en weer.

Skielik kom die Hispaniola reg in die wind. Die kluiwers hier agter my kraak hard, die roer gee n slag, die hele skip sidder en skud, en toe swaai die grootseil na binne toe, en ek kry die agterdek te sien.

Daar was die twee wagters ook werklik; die een met die rooi mus lê op sy rug, stokstyf, met sy arms uitgestrek soos die van n kruis, en sy tande sigbaar tussen die oop lippe. Israel Hands leun teen die verskansing, met die ken op die bors, en die hande slap langs hom op die dek. Sy gesig was so bleek soos n vetkers.

n Tydlank het die skip aangehou met ruk en pluk soos n jongperd; die seile vul, nou aan die een kant, en dan aan die ander, en die mas kreun hardop onder die geweldige inspanning. Nou en dan kom daar n wolk skuim oor die verskansing gewaai, en n swaar slag, soos die skip met die boeg teen die swelling aan stamp; soveel moeiliker was dit vir die groot, opgetuigde skip om te seil as vir my ou skewe, eenvoudige kano, wat nou op die bodem van die see lê.

By elke ruk van die skoener, skuif Rooirinus heen en weer; maar, en dit was so aaklig om te aanskou onder dit alles verander sy bonding nie, nog minder die gryns op sy gesig. By elke skok lyk dit ook of Hands al hoe dieper inmekaar sak, sy voete gly verder uit oor die dek, en sy hele lyf buig oor na die agterstewe toe, totdat ek naderhand niks meer van sy gesig kon sien nie, as net een oor en die punt van sy snor.

Rondom die twee kon ek donker bloedvlekke sien op die planke, en ek was oortuig dat hulle mekaar in hulle dronkenskap vermoor het.

Ek staan nog so en kyk en wonder, toe Israel Hands

hom langsaam omdraai, en met n steun weer opsukkel teen die mas aan, soos ek hom die eerste maal gesien het. Daardie gesteun, en die manier waarop sy mond oop-hang, het dwars deur my hart gegaan. Maar toe onthou ek weer wat ek in die appelvot afgeluister het, en my medelyde verdwyn.

Ek stap nader tot by die groot mas.

Kom aan, word wakker, Mnr. Hand! sê ek met n spotlaggie. Hy rol sy oë om na my kant toe, maar hy was te ver heen om sy verwondering te kenne te gee. Al wat hy kon uitbring was die een woord, Brandewyn.

Ek sien toe daar was geen tyd om te verloor nie; ek kies onder die spriet deur, wat weer oor die dek slinger, en hardloop die kajuitstrap af na onder toe.

Die kajuit was in n onbeskryflike toestand. Elke slot was oopgebreek om na die kaart te soek. Die vloer was hard van die modder, waar die woestaards gesit en drink het nadat hulle in die moeras rond gestap het. Op die beskotte, wat helder wit geverf was, lê merke van vuil hande. Dosyne lee bottels klink soos hulle teen mekaar stamp in die hoeke, as die skip skielik rol. Een van die dokter se mediese boeke lê oop op die tafel, met die helfte van die blaaie uitgeskeur, seker om hulle pype mee aan te steek. Tussen al die verwoesting skyn die lamp nog altyd, met n donkerbruin rookliggie.

Ek gaan af na die kelder toe; al die vate was weg, en van die bottels was daar n verbasende aantal leeggedrink en weggegooi. Van die begin van die muitery af, was seker geen een van die kerels ooit nugter gewees nie.

Ek soek rond, en kry tog n bottel met n bietjie brandewyn daarin vir Hands; en vir myself n paar beskuit, ingelegde vrugte, en n groot tros rosyne, met n stuk kaas. Hiermee kom ek op dek, sit toe my eie kos neer waar die bootsman dit nie kon bykom nie, hardloop eers na die watervat toe, en drink n lang, lang teug water. Toe eers gee ek vir Hands die brandewyn.

Hy het seker n glas vol uitgedrink voor hy die bottel van sy mond wegneem.

A-a! sug hy, by my siel, ek het dit nodig gehad! Ek gaan sit in my eie hoekie en begin te eet.

Is jy swaar gekwes? vra ek.

Hy brom iets agter in sy keel.

As daardie dokter nou aan boord was, sou hy my wel gou weer op die been hê. Maar sien jy, ek is nou maar altyd so ongelukkig. Daardie vabond daar is morsdood, en hy wys na die man met die rooi mus. Hy was ook nooit n seeman gewees nie. En waar op aarde kom jy vandaan?

Wel, sê ek, ek het aan boord gekom om besit te neem van die skip,

Mnr. Hands; en jy sal my asseblief as jou kaptein beskou tot verdere orders.

Hy kyk my suur aan, maar hy sê niks. Daar was al weer n bietjie kleur op sy wange, al sien hy daar nog maar baie siek uit, en so swak dat hy rond gly op die dek by elke beweging van die skip.

Vereers, dan, ek kan nie hierdie vlag laat waai nie, Mnr. Hands. As u daar niks op teen het nie, sal ek dit maar afhaal.

Ek hardloop na die vlaglyn toe, laat die vervloekte swart vlag afgly, en gooi dit in die see.

Lewe die koning! skree ek, en swaai met my keps. Dit is laaste sien van Kaptein Silver!

Hy kyk my skelm aan, met die ken op die bors.

Ek dink, sê hy eindelijk, ek dink, Kaptein Hawkins, dat jy graag aan land sou wil kom, nie waar nie? Ja, wat wil jy sê? vra ek, en ek begin weer te eet, met n baie goeie eetlus.

Hierdie vent, begin hy, en hy knik met sy kop na die lyk se kant toe, was n ellendige Ier, OBrien, dit

was sy naam. Wel, ek en hy het saam die seile gehys, want ons wou die skip terugneem. Maar nou is hy dood, sien jy, en ek wil graag weet wie die skip sal stuur? Jy sal dit nooit alleen regkry nie, of ek mag jou help. Kyk hier, ek het n plan. Jy gee my kos en drank, en n ou sakdoek of so iets om my wond te verbind; en dan sal ek jou sê hoe om die skip te stuur. Dit is n eerlike voorstel, nie waar nie?

Ek kan jou een ding sê, Hands: ek gaan nie terug na Kaptein Kidd se ankerplaas nie. Ek sal reguit na North Inlet toe stuur, en daar stillettjies aan strand loop.

So! sê hy, is dit jou plan? Wel, ek het my kans gehad, en ek het verloor. Jy is nou bo-baas. North Inlet, sê jy? Nou ja, ek sal jou help om die skip na Execution Dock te seil, as jy dit wil hê! sê hy, met n vloek.

Dit het vir my na n redelike voorstel gelyk. Ons het dadelik die ooreenkoms gesluit. Binne drie minute seil die Hispaniola gemaklik voor die wind uit al langs die kus van Skateiland op, en ek het goeie hoop gehad om nog voor die middag die noordpunt om te seil, en North Inlet voor hoogwater te bereik, sodat ons die skip veilig aan die strand kon bring.

Toe bind ek die roerpen vas, en gaan na onder toe, waar ek n sagte sysakdoek van my moeder uit my eie kis haal. Met my hulp het Hands toe hiermee die diep oop wond wat hy in sy been gekry het, verbind. Nadat hy iets gekry het om te eet, en nog n paar slukke brandewyn geneem het, begin hy wonderlik by te kom, hy gaan regop sit, praat hard en duidelik, en lyk glad n ander mens,

Die wind was besonder gunstig. Die Hispaniola gly soos n voëltjie oor die water, sodat die strand by ons verbyvlieg, en ons iedere

oomblik n ander uitsig het. Ons was gou by die heuwels verby, en vaar nou langs n lae, sanderige streek, met dwergagtige denne bedek. Dit was ook weer gou verby, en ons was om die hoek van die eiland.

Ek was hoog in my skik met my nuwe bevelhebber-skap, en ek geniet toe van harte die lekker warm son-skyn, en die gesig van al die mooi plekke langs die strand. Ek had nou volop water en goeie kos, en my gewete, wat my al baie gepla het oor my weglopery uit die blokhuis uit, was nou weer gesus deur die groot kordaatstuk wat ek aangevang het. Ek sou niks meer gehad het om te verlang nie, as dit nie was dat die oe van die bootsman my so gedurig oor die dek agtervolg het nie, terwyl n spotlaggie om sy lippe speel. Die glimlag was vol pyn en swakheid so n maer, oumens-laggie; maar daar was ook n uitdrukking van verraad in sy sluwe oë, soos hy my daar sit en beskou, as ek rondwerk op die dek.

# Chapter 26

## Israel Hands

THE wind, serving us to a desire, now hauled into the west. We could run so much the easier from the north-east corner of the island to the mouth of the North Inlet. Only, as we had no power to anchor and dared not beach her till the tide had flowed a good deal farther, time hung on our hands. The coxswain told me how to lay the ship to; after a good many trials I succeeded, and we both sat in silence over another meal.

“Cap’n,” said he at length with that same uncomfortable smile, “here’s my old shipmate, O’Brien; s’pose you was to heave him overboard. I ain’t partic’lar as a rule, and I don’t take no blame for settling his hash, but I don’t reckon him ornamental now, do you?”

“I’m not strong enough, and I don’t like the job; and there he lies, for me,” said I.

“This here’s an unlucky ship, this HISPANIOLA, Jim,” he went on, blinking. “There’s a power of men been killed in this HISPANIOLA—a sight o’ poor seamen dead and gone since you and me took ship to Bristol. I never seen sich dirty luck, not I. There was this here O’Brien now—he’s dead, ain’t he? Well now, I’m no scholar, and you’re a lad as can read and figure, and to put it straight, do you take it as a dead man is dead for good, or do he come alive again?”

“You can kill the body, Mr. Hands, but not the spirit; you must know that already,” I replied. “O’Brien there is in another world, and may be watching us.”

“Ah!” says he. “Well, that’s unfort’nate—appears as if killing parties was a waste of time. Howsomever, sperrits don’t reckon for much, by what I’ve seen. I’ll chance it with the sperrits, Jim. And now, you’ve spoke up free, and I’ll take it kind if you’d step down into that there cabin and get me a—well, a—shiver my timbers! I can’t hit the name on ‘t; well, you get me a bottle of wine, Jim—this here brandy’s too strong for my head.”

Now, the coxswain’s hesitation seemed to be unnatural, and as for the notion of his preferring wine to

brandy, I entirely disbelieved it. The whole story was a pretext. He wanted me to leave the deck—so much was plain; but with what purpose I could in no way imagine.

His eyes never met mine; they kept wandering to and fro, up and down, now with a look to the sky, now with a flitting glance upon the

dead O'Brien. All the time he kept smiling and putting his tongue out in the most guilty, embarrassed manner, so that a child could have told that he was

bent on some deception. I was prompt with my answer, however, for I saw where my advantage lay and that with a fellow so densely stupid I could easily conceal my suspicions to the end.

"Some wine?" I said. "Far better. Will you have white or red?"

"Well, I reckon it's about the blessed same to me, shipmate," he replied; "so it's strong, and plenty of it, what's the odds?"

"All right," I answered. "I'll bring you port, Mr. Hands. But I'll have to dig for it."

With that I scuttled down the companion with all the noise I could, slipped off my shoes, ran quietly along the sparred gallery, mounted the forecastle ladder, and popped my head out of the fore companion. I knew he would not expect to see me there, yet I took every precaution possible, and certainly the worst of my suspicions proved too true.

He had risen from his position to his hands and knees, and though his leg obviously hurt him pretty sharply when he moved—for I could hear him stifle a groan—yet it was at a good, rattling rate that he trailed himself across the deck. In half a minute he had reached the port

scuppers and picked, out of a coil of rope, a long knife, or rather a short dirk, discoloured to the hilt with blood. He looked upon it for a moment, thrusting forth his under jaw, tried the point upon his hand, and then, hastily concealing it in the bosom of his jacket, trundled back again into his old place against the bulwark.

This was all that I required to know. Israel could move about, he was now armed, and if he had been at so much trouble to get rid of me, it was plain that I was meant to be the victim. What he would do afterwards—whether he would try to crawl right across the island from North Inlet to the camp among the swamps or whether he would fire Long Tom, trusting that his own comrades might come first to help him—was, of course, more than I could say.

Yet I felt sure that I could trust him in one point, since in that our interests jumped together, and that

was in the disposition of the schooner. We both desired to have her stranded safe enough, in a sheltered place, and so that, when the time came, she could be got off again with as little labour and danger as might be; and until that was done I considered that my life would certainly be spared.

While I was thus turning the business over in my mind, I had not been idle with my body. I had stolen back to

the cabin, slipped once more into my shoes, and laid my hand at random

on a bottle of wine, and now, with this for an excuse, I made my reappearance on the deck.

Hands lay as I had left him, all fallen together in a bundle and with his eyelids lowered as though he were too weak to bear the light. He looked up, however, at my coming, knocked the neck off the bottle like a man

who had done the same thing often, and took a good swig, with his favourite toast of "Here's luck!" Then he lay quiet for a little, and then, pulling out a stick of tobacco, begged me to cut him a quid.

"Cut me a junk o' that," says he, "for

I haven't no knife and hardly strength enough, so be as I had. Ah, Jim, Jim, I reckon I've missed stays! Cut me a quid, as'll likely be the last, lad, for

I'm for my long home, and no mistake."

"Well," said I, "I'll cut you some tobacco, but if I was you and thought myself so badly, I would go to my prayers like a Christian man."

"Why?" said he. "Now, you tell me why."

"Why?" I cried. "You were asking me just now about the dead. You've broken your trust; you've lived in sin and lies and blood; there's a man you killed lying at your feet this moment, and you ask me why! For God's mercy, Mr. Hands, that's why."

I spoke with a little heat, thinking of the bloody dirk he had hidden in his

pocket and designed, in his ill thoughts, to end me with. He, for his part, took a great draught of the wine and spoke with the most unusual solemnity.

"For thirty years," he said, "I've sailed the seas and seen good and bad, better and worse, fair weather and foul, provisions running out, knives going, and what not. Well, now I tell you, I never seen good come o' goodness yet. Him as strikes first is my fancy; dead men don't bite; them's my views—amen, so be it. And now, you look here," he added, suddenly changing his tone, "we've had about enough of this foolery. The tide's made good enough by now. You just take my orders, Cap'n Hawkins, and we'll sail slap in and be done with it."

All told, we had scarce two miles to run; but the navigation was delicate, the entrance to this northern anchorage was not only narrow and shoal, but lay east and west, so that the schooner must be nicely handled to be got in. I think I was a good, prompt subaltern, and I am very sure that Hands was an excellent pilot,

for we went about and about and dodged in, shaving the banks, with a certainty and a neatness that were a pleasure to behold.

Scarcely had we passed the heads before the land closed around us.

The shores of North Inlet were as thickly wooded as those of the southern anchorage, but the space was longer and narrower and more like, what in truth it was, the estuary of a river. Right before us, at the southern end, we saw the wreck of a ship in the last stages of dilapidation. It had been a great vessel of three masts but had lain so long exposed to the injuries of the weather that it was hung about with great webs of dripping seaweed, and on the deck of it shore bushes had taken root and now flourished thick with flowers. It was a sad sight, but it showed us that the anchorage was calm.

"Now," said Hands, "look there; there's a pet bit for to beach a ship in. Fine flat sand, never a cat's paw, trees all around of it, and flowers a-blowing like a garding on that old ship."

"And once beached," I inquired, "how shall we get her off again?"

"Why, so," he replied: "you take a line ashore there on the other side at low water, take a turn about one of them big pines; bring it back, take a turn around the capstan, and lie to

for the tide. Come high water, all

hands take a pull upon the line, and off she comes as sweet as natur'.

And now, boy, you stand by. We're near the bit now, and she's too much way on her. Starboard a little—so—

steady—starboard—larboard a little—steady—steady!"

So he issued his commands, which I breathlessly obeyed, till, all of a sudden, he cried, "Now, my hearty, luff!" And I put the helm hard up, and the HISPANIOLA swung round rapidly and ran stem on for the low, wooded shore.

The excitement of these last manoeuvres had somewhat interfered with the watch I had kept

hitherto, sharply enough, upon the coxswain. Even then I was still so much interested, waiting for the ship to touch, that I had quite forgot the peril that hung over my head and stood craning over the starboard bulwarks and watching the ripples spreading wide before the bows. I might have fallen without a struggle for my life had not a sudden disquietude seized upon me and

made me turn my head. Perhaps I had heard a creak or seen his shadow moving with the tail of my eye; perhaps it was an instinct like a

cat's; but, sure enough, when I

looked round, there was Hands,

already half-way towards me, with the dirk in his right hand.

We must both have cried out aloud when our eyes met, but while mine was the shrill cry of terror, his was a roar of fury like a charging bully's.

At the same instant, he threw himself forward and I leapt sideways



towards the bows. As I did so, I let go of the tiller, which sprang sharp to leeward, and I think this saved my life, for it struck Hands across the chest and stopped him, for the moment, dead.

Before he could recover, I was safe out of the corner where he had me trapped, with all the deck to dodge

about. Just forward of the main-mast I stopped, drew a pistol from my pocket, took a cool aim, though he had already turned and was once more coming directly after me, and drew the trigger. The hammer fell, but there followed neither flash nor sound; the priming was useless with sea-water. I cursed myself for my neglect. Why had not I, long before, reprimed and reloaded my only weapons? Then I should not have been as now, a mere fleeing sheep before this butcher.

Wounded as he was, it was wonderful how fast he could move, his grizzled hair tumbling over his

face, and his face itself as red as a red ensign with his haste and fury. I had no time to try my other pistol, nor indeed much inclination, for I was sure it would be useless. One

thing I saw plainly: I must not simply retreat before him, or he would speedily hold me boxed into the bows, as a moment since he had so nearly boxed me in the stern. Once

so caught, and nine or ten inches of the blood-stained dirk would be my last experience on this side of eternity. I placed my palms against the main-mast, which was of a goodish bigness, and waited, every nerve upon the stretch.

Seeing that I meant to dodge, he also paused; and a moment or two passed in feints on his part and corresponding movements upon mine. It was such a game as I had often played at home about the rocks of Black Hill Cove, but never

before, you may be sure, with such a wildly beating heart as now. Still, as I say, it was a boy's game, and I thought I could hold my own at it against an elderly seaman with a wounded thigh. Indeed my courage had begun to rise so high that I allowed myself a few darting thoughts on what would be the end of the affair, and while I saw certainly

that I could spin it out for long, I saw no hope of any ultimate escape. Well, while things stood thus, suddenly the HISPANIOLA struck, staggered, ground for an instant in the sand, and then, swift as a blow, canted over to the port side till the deck stood at an angle of forty-five degrees and about a puncheon of water splashed into the scupper holes and lay, in a pool, between the deck and bulwark.

We were both of us capsized in a second, and both of us rolled, almost together, into the scuppers, the dead red-cap, with his arms still spread out, tumbling stiffly after us. So near

were we, indeed, that my head came against the coxswain's foot with

a crack that made my teeth rattle.

Blow and all, I was the first afoot again, for Hands had got involved with the dead body. The sudden canting of the ship had made the deck no place for running on; I had

to find some new way of escape, and that upon the instant, for my foe was almost touching me. Quick as

thought, I sprang into the mizzen shrouds, rattled up hand over hand, and did not draw a breath till I was seated on the cross-trees.

I had been saved by being prompt;

the dirk had struck not half a foot

below me as I pursued my upward flight; and there stood Israel Hands with his mouth open and his face upturned to mine, a perfect statue of surprise and disappointment.

Now that I had a moment to myself, I lost no time in changing the priming of my pistol, and then, having one ready for service, and to make assurance doubly sure, I proceeded

to draw the load of the other and recharge it afresh from the beginning.

My new employment struck Hands all of a heap; he began to see the dice going against him, and after an obvious hesitation, he also hauled himself heavily into the shrouds, and with the dirk in his teeth, began slowly and painfully to mount. It cost him no end of time and groans to

haul his wounded leg behind him, and I had quietly finished my arrangements before he was much more than a third of the way up. Then, with a pistol in either hand, I addressed him.

"One more step, Mr. Hands," said I, "and I'll blow your brains out! Dead men don't bite, you know," I added with a chuckle.

He stopped instantly. I could see by the working of his face that he was trying to think, and the process was

so slow and laborious that, in my new-found security, I laughed aloud.

At last, with a swallow or two, he spoke, his face still wearing the same expression of extreme perplexity. In order to speak he had to take the dagger from his mouth,

but in all else he remained unmoved. "Jim," says he, "I reckon we're fouled, you and me, and we'll have

to sign articles. I'd have had you but for that there lurch, but I don't have no luck, not I; and I reckon I'll have

to strike, which comes hard, you see, for a master mariner to a ship's youngster like you, Jim."

I was drinking in his words and

smiling away, as conceited as a cock upon a wall, when, all in a breath, back went his right hand over his shoulder. Something sang like an arrow through the air; I felt a blow and then a sharp pang, and

there I

was pinned by the shoulder to the mast. In the horrid pain and surprise of the moment—I scarce can say it was by my own volition, and I am sure it was without a conscious aim—

- both my pistols went off, and both escaped out of my hands. They did not fall alone; with a choked cry, the coxswain loosed his grasp upon the shrouds and plunged head first into the water.

# Chapter 26

## Israel Hands

Die wind het gunstig gebly, en ons kon dus gemaklik van die noordoostelike hoek van die eiland seil na die mond van North Inlet. Maar ons kon nie anker nie, en kon ook nie waag om die skip te laat strand voor die vloed n hele entjie hoër was nie. Die tyd begin my te verveel. Die gewonde man het my gewys hoe om met die seile te werk; ek het dit oor en oor gedoen, en toe sit ons weer stil, en eet nog n maal.

Kaptein, sê hy eindelijk, met daardie selfde wonderlike laggie, hier is my ou oorlede maat, OBrien; hoe sal dit wees as jy hom oorboord gooi? Ek is gewoonlik nie so danig fyngevoelig nie, en ek is glad nie spyt dat ek hom na die hier smaals gehelp het nie; maar hy lyk nie vir my al te m i nie, en vir jou?

Ek is nie sterk genoeg nie, en ek het geen sin in die werk nie. Vir my part kan hy maar daar bly lê, sê ek.

Dit is tog n ongelukkige skip, hierdie Hispaniola, Jim, gaan hy voort. Daar is al n hele boel manne dood en vergaan vandat jy en ek van Bristol af weg is. Nog nooit het ek sowat belewe nie. Hierdie OBrien, byvoorbeeld, hy is tog dood, nie waar nie? Kyk hier, ek is nie geleerd nie, en jy is n seun wat kan lees en syfer; sê my nou reguit, wat dink jy, as n mens eenmaal dood is, is dit dan vir goed, of word jy weer lewendig?

Jy kan die liggaam doodmaak, Hands, maar nie die gees nie, dit weet jy tog seker? antwoord ek. „OBrien is nou in n ander wêreld, en miskien sit hy vir ons en kyk.

A! sê Hands. Wel, dit is ongelukkig dit lyk of dit net tyd vermors is om mense dood te maak, weet jy? Maar tog, n spook beteken maar min, sover as ek kan uitmaak. Ek sal my man staan teen die spoke, Jim. En nou, wil jy my nie n groot plesier doen nie? Gaan tog na die kajuit toe, en bring vir my n . . . wel, verduiwels, hoe is die ding se naam ook nou weer? Bring vir my n bottel wyn, Jim. Hierdie brandewyn is te sterk vir my kop.

Dit het vir my onnatuurlik gelyk dat die bootsman so haggel. En ek het daar niks aan geglo dat hy meer van wyn as van brandewyn hou nie. Hy soek net n ekskuus om my van die dek af weg te kry, dit was duidelik. Maar wat was nou sy oogmerk? Hy het my nooit eenmaal in die oë gekyk nie. Hy kyk rond, op en af, nou na die lug, en dan weer na die lyk van OBrien. En al die tyd glimlag hy, en elke slag steek hy sy tong uit, soos n kind wat verleë is. Dit moes n baie dom mens wees

wat nie kon sien dat hy iets wou wegsteek nie. Ek was dadelik klaar met my antwoord, want ek sien dat dit die beste was vir my om nie te laat merk dat ek iets agterkom nie.

Wyn? sê ek. Ja, dis baie beter vir jou. Watter soort wil jy hê? Wit of rooi?

Ag, dit maak nie saak nie, maat, solank as dit maar sterk is, en genoeg is, sê hy.

Goed, sê ek. Ek sal vir jou Portwyn bring, Hands. Maar ek sal lank moet snuffel.

Toe hardloop ek met n groot gedruis die trap af, trek my skoene uit, glip stilletjies langs die galery na die voorskip, en klim met die leer op, en steek my kop versigtig op die dek uit. Ek wis hy sou nie verwag om my daar te sien nie. Tog was ek so versigtig as moontlik: en, waarlik, my ergste vermoedens was gegrond gewees!

Hy het opgestaan, en kruip nou op hande en knieë rond. Sy been moes baie pynlik gewees het, want ek kon hom hoor steun, en tog gaan hy taamlik vinnig oor die dek. In n halwe minuut was hy by n rol tou, en haal daaruit n lang mes, wat tot by die hef met bloed besmeer was. Hy bekyk dit vir n oomblik, en steek daarby sy onderkaak vooruit, toe voel hy met sy hand of die punt skerp is, en daarna steek hy dit haastig weg onder sy baadjie in, en sleep sy lyf weer terug oor die dek na sy ou plek toe teen die verskansing.

Dit was al wat ek wou geweet het. Israel Hands was nie te swak om hom te beweeg nie; hy was nou gewapen; en hy het soveel moeite gedoen om my uit die pad uit te kry, dat ek seker daarvan was dat ek die slagoffer sou wees. Wat hy daarna sou doen, of hy sou probeer om dwarsoor die eiland te kruip, van North Inlet af tot by die kamp in die moeras, en of hy miskien die kanon sou afskiet, in die hoop dat sy eie maats die eerste sou wees om hom te kom help, was natuurlik meer as wat ek kon raai.

Tog was ek seker daarvan dat ek hom op een punt kon vertrou, want ons had daar eweveel belang by, en dit was, wat ons met die skip sou aanvang. Altwee van ons wou dit graag op n veilige plek aan wal bring, waar dit beskut sou wees en tog gemaklik weer die see kon invaar, as dit nodig word. Totdat dit gedaan was, sou my lewe nie in gevaar wees nie.

Onderwyl ek dit alles so bedink, was my liggaam nie stil nie. Ek het stil na die kajuit gegaan, weer my skoene aangetrek, en toe met die bottel wyn op dek gegaan.

Hands lê nog net soos ek hom daar laat staan het, inmekaar, op n bondel, met sy oë toe, asof hy te swak was om die lig te verdra. Maar toe ek by hom kom, kyk hy op, slaan die bottel se nek af, soos n man wat die kuns verstaan, en neem n goeie sluk, met sy gewone

heildronk: Gesondheid! Daarna lê hy so n rukkie stil, en toe haal hy n rol tabak te voorskyn, en vra my om tog vir hom n pruimpie af te sny.

Ek het nie n mes nie, en ook nie die krag om dit self af te sny nie, sê hy. Jim, ou maat, ek glo waarlik dat dit klaar is met my! Sny vir my n pruimpie af, dit is seker my laaste. Ek gaan op my laaste, lang reis, ou seun.

Goed, sê ek, die tabak sal ek sny. Maar as ek jy was, en my einde so naby was, sou ek bid, soos dit n Christen betaam.

Hoekom? vra hy ewe verwonder.

Hoekom? antwoord ek, Jy het my netnou gevra omtrent die dooies. Jy het jou woord gebreek, jy het in sonde geleef, gelieg, en bloed vergiet; daar, aan jou voete, lê nou n man wat jy vermoor het; en dan vra jy nog hoekom! Om Gods wil, Mnr. Hands, dit is hoekom.'

Ek het emstig gepraat, want ek dink al die tyd aan die bloedige mes wat hy in sy bors dra, en waarmee hy van plan was om my dood te steek. Hy neem n groot sluk wyn, en sê toe met buitengewone plegtigheid:

Dertig jaar lank het ek die see bevaar, en goed en kwaad gesien, mooi weer, en storms, honger gely, geveg vir my lewe, en wat nie alles nie. En weet jy wat, ek het nooit gesien dat dit n mens betaal om goed te wees nie. Hy wat die eerste steek gee, is die beste daarvan af. Dooie mense byt nie, dit is my opinie. Amen, so sy dit! En nou, kyk hier, alle gekheid op n stokkie. Die water is nou hoog genoeg. Neem jy nou maar net jou orders van my, en dan, Kaptein Hawkins, seil ons veilig binne, en is ons klaar.

Dit was nie meer as twee myl wat ons nog moes seil nie; maar dit was n moeilike tog. Die ingang na hierdie ankerplaas toe was nou en vlak, sodat die skip baie sekuur gestuur moes word, om dit in te kry. Ek dink ek was n handige, gehoorsame leerjong, en Hands was sonder twyfel n uitstekende loods. Ons het gedraai, en geswenk, om die kante van die kanaal te vermy, en dit alles so rats en so netjies, dat dit n plesier was om dit te sien.

Ons het skaars om die hoek gevaar, of die land sluit ons aan weeskante in. Die strand was hier net so dig begroei as by die ander ankerplaas; maar die ruimte was langer en nouer, soos die mond van n rivier. Reg voor ons sien ons die wrak van n skip lê, byna heeltemal vergaan. Dit was n groot driemaster gewees, maar dit hang nou vol seegras, en op die dek groei bossies, en plante, nou oorgetrek met blomme. Dit was n droewige gesig, maar tog was dit n bewys dat die ankerplaas kalm was.

„Kyk hier, sê Hands, Hier is nou n pragtige plek om die skip op die strand te bring. Vlak sand, sonder een rimpeltjie, bome aan weerskante, en daardie ou skip so vol blomme soos n blomtuint.

En, as dit eenmaal op die strand is, hoe sal ons dit ooit weer daar af

kry? vra ek.

Ek sal jou vertel, se Hands. Jy neem n lyn saam na die land toe, met laagwater; slaan dit n slag om een van daardie groot dennebome; bring dit terug, en draai dit n slag om die spil, en wag vir die vloed. As die hoogwater kom, trek ons albei so hard as ons kan aan die lyn, eri daar gaan ons! En nou, ou seun, hou jou gereed. Ons is amper daar, en ons gaan te vinnig. n Bietjie na stuurboord so stadig! stuurboord bakboord, nog so eft'ens so ja, stadig nou!

So deel hy sy bevel uit, en ek gehoorsaam, uitasem, tot hy meteens skree: Loef op! Ek gooi die roer vinnig anderkant toe, die Hispaniola swaai skielik om en loop vas op die lae strand.

Die inspanning van die laaste paar oomblikke het my laat vergeet om die bootman in die oog te hou, soos voorheen. Selfs nou staan ek so met gespanne aandag en wag dat die skip moet grond raak, dat ek glad vergeet watter gevaar oor my kop hang. Ek leun halflyf oor die verskansing, en kyk na die rimpels wat met wit skuim vir die boeg opkrul. Ek sou seker sonder n kans om my te verweer gesterf het, as ek nie skielik onrustig geword het, en omgekyk het nie. Miskien het ek n plank hoor kraak, of altemit sy skaduwee uit die hoek van my oog gesien; of anders was dit maar pure instink soos n kat sn. In elk geval, toe ek omkyk, sien ek vir Hands, met die mes in sy hand, al meer as halfpad oor die dek na my toe.

Ons het albei hardop geskree toe ons oë mekaar ontmoet; maar myne was n angskreet, terwyl syne soos die gebrul van n kwaai bul was. Op dieselfde oomblik gooi hy sy lyf vorentoe, en ek spring opsy. Ek laat natuurlik die roer los, en dit slinger terug na die anderkant toe. Dit het seker my lewe gered, want dit slaan Hands teen sy bors, en gooi hom half bedwelmd agteroor.

Voor hy weer kon orent kom, was ek veilig uit die hoek uit, waar hy my vasgekeer gehad het, en nou het ek die hele dek voor my om uit sy pad uit te kom. Vlak voor die groot mas bly ek staan, haal n pistool uit my sak, en mik bedaard, al was hy al weer omgedraai, sodat hy nou reg op my af kom. Ek trek af. Die haan val, maar verder gebeur daar niks. Die kruit op die pan het nat geword van die seewater. Ek het myself verwens vir my nalatigheid. Hoekom het ek nie lankal my enigste wapens ondersoek nie? Dan sou ek nie nou soos n skaap gewees het wat vlug vir hierdie slagter nie.

Dit was wonderlik om te sien hoe vinnig hy vooruit kon kom met sy gewonde been en al. Sy grys hare hang oor sy gesig, en die gesig self was bloedrooi van haas en woede. Ek het nie tyd gehad om my ander pistool te probeer nie, en eintlik ook nie veel lus nie, want ek was seker dat dit ook verniet sou wees. Een ding was duidelik: ek moes nie net aanhou padgee vir hom nie, of hy sou my gou-gou weer ęrens vasgekeer he, soos n oomblik tevore die geval gewees het. Was ek

eenmaal so gevang, dan sou nege of tien duim van die bloedige staal my laaste ondervinding wees aan hierdie sy van die graf. Ek sit my hande teen die groot mas aan, wat taamlik dik was, en staan so en wag, met iedere spier gespan.

Toe hy sien dat my plan was om te koes, bly hy ook staan, en n paar oomblikke hou ons so aan: hy maak of hy aankom, en ek maak of ek padgee. Dit was n speletjie wat ek baie maal by my huis, rondom die rotse van Black Hill Cove gespeel het, maar nooit tevore met n hart wat so geweldig geklop het nie, daar is ek seker van! Maar tog, dit was n kinderspeletjie, en ek was seker dat ek dit sou wen teen n ou matroos met n gewonde been. My moed het so gestyg, dat ek selfs tyd gehad het om te dink wat die einde van die affere sou wees. Ek was oortuig dat ek dit taamlik lank sou

kan volhou, maar tog sien ek geen kans om te ontsnap nie.

Sake het so gestaan, toe die Hispaniola skielik grond raak, n entjie oor die sand skuif, en toe, bliksemsnel, na bakboord toe oorkantel, sodat die dek n hoek van vyf en veertig grade maak, en n stroom water oor die dek plas.

Ons was altwee onderstebo, en rol amper saam oor die planke; die dooie man met sy uitgespreide arms rol styf agter ons aan. So naby mekaar was ons, dat my kop teen die bootsman se voet gestamp het, met n slag wat my tande laat klap. Tog was ek die eerste op die been, want Hands het met die lyk deurmekaar geraak. Die dek was nou so skuins dat dit onmoontlik was om daarop te hardloop. Ek moes n ander plan maak om weg te kom, en dit ook net dadelik, want my vyand was op my hakke. So vinnig soos n gedagte spring ek in die touwerk van die mas, en haal byna nie asem nie voor ek op een van die kruisbome sit.

My ratsheid het my gered. Die mes het minder as n halwe voet onderkant my vasgesteek, en daar staan Israel Hands, met oop mond, en sy gesig na my toe, soos n standbeeld van verbasing en teleurstelling.

Noudat ek n oomblik vry was, gooi ek gou vars kruit op die pan van een pistool, en toe, omdat ek tog een gereed had om te gebruik, begin ek die ander een van nuuts af te laai.

Hands was dood-verslae toe hy dit sien. Hy begin te sien dat die kanse teen hom gekeer was, en, nadat hy n rukkie so besluiteloos gestaan het, begin hy ook langsaam, met die mes tussen sy tande, die toue in te klim. Steun-steun sleep hy sy gewonde been agter hom aan; en ek was lankal klaar met laai, voor hy n derde van die distansie opgeklim het. Toe sê ek, met n pistool in iedere hand:

Nog een stap, Hands, en ek skiet jou voor die kop! Dooie mense byt nie, weet jy, voeg ek daarby met n laggie.

Hy hou dadelik op met klim. Aan die manier waarop hy sy gesig



trek, kon ek sien dat hy probeer om te dink, en dit gaan by hom so stadig en moeilik, dat ek hardop lag, daar van my veilige plekkie af. Hy gee eers so n paar slukke, en toe praat hy, maar sy gesig lyk nog vol verbasing. Om te praat, het hy die mes uit sy mond gehaal, maar verder bly sy houding onverander.

Jim, sê hy, ek reken ons is altwee onklaar geraak, en ons sal moet vrede maak. As die skip nie gekantel het nie, dan het ek jou gehad, maatjie. Maar ek is nou maar altyd so ongelukkig, en dit lyk vir my dat ek sal moet ingee, en dit gaan maar swaar vir n eersteklas seeman, soos ek, om in te gee vir n skeepsjong soos jy, Jim.

Ek luister met n glimlag na sy woorde, en voel so verwaand soos n hoenderhaan, toe hy skielik sy hand oor sy skouer gooi. Daar vlieg iets soos n pyl deur die lug; ek voel n slag, en toe n skerp pyn, en daar sit ek, met die skouer vasgesteek aan die mas. In die aaklige pyn en verbasing van die oomblik, ek kan nie sê dat dit deur my eie wil geskied is nie, en ek is seker dat ek nie korrel gevat het nie, gaan altwee my pistole af, en val uit my hande. Hulle het nie alleen geval nie; met n gesmoorde skreeu laat die bootsman die toue los, en tuimel hals oor kop in die water af.

# Chapter 27

## “Pieces of Eight”

OWING to the cant of the vessel, the masts hung far out over the water,

and from my perch on the cross-trees I had nothing below me but the surface of the bay. Hands, who was not so far up, was in consequence nearer to the ship and fell between me and the bulwarks. He rose once to the surface in a lather of foam and blood and then sank again for good. As the water settled, I could see him lying huddled together on the clean, bright sand in the shadow of the vessel's sides. A fish or two whipped past his body. Sometimes, by the quivering of the water, he appeared to move a little, as if he were trying to rise. But he was dead enough, for all that, being both shot and drowned, and was food for fish in the very place where he had designed my slaughter.

I was no sooner certain of this than I began to feel sick, faint, and terrified. The hot blood was running over my back and chest. The dirk, where it had pinned my shoulder to the mast, seemed to burn like a hot iron; yet it was not so much these

real sufferings that distressed me, for these, it seemed to me, I could bear

without a murmur; it was the horror I had upon my mind of falling from the cross-trees into that still green water, beside the body of the coxswain.

I clung with both hands till my nails ached, and I shut my eyes as if to cover up the peril. Gradually my mind came back again, my pulses quieted down to a more natural time, and I was once more in possession of myself.

It was my first thought to pluck forth the dirk, but either it stuck too hard

or my nerve failed me, and I desisted with a violent shudder. Oddly enough, that very shudder did the

business. The knife, in fact, had come the nearest in the world to missing me altogether; it held me by a mere pinch of skin, and this the shudder tore away. The blood ran

down the faster, to be sure, but I was my own master again and only tacked to the mast by my coat and shirt.

These last I broke through with a sudden jerk, and then regained the deck by the starboard shrouds. For nothing in the world would I have again ventured, shaken as I was, upon the overhanging port shrouds

from which Israel had so lately fallen.

I went below and did what I could for my wound; it pained me a good deal and still bled freely, but it was neither deep nor dangerous, nor did it greatly gall me when I used my arm. Then I looked around me, and as the ship was now, in a sense, my own, I began to think of clearing it from its last passenger—the dead man, O'Brien.

He had pitched, as I have said, against the bulwarks, where he lay like some horrible, ungainly sort of puppet, life-size, indeed, but how different from life's colour or life's comeliness! In that position I could easily have my way with him, and as

the habit of tragical adventures had worn off almost all my terror for the dead, I took him by the waist as if he had been a sack of bran and with one good heave, tumbled him overboard. He went in with a sounding plunge; the red cap came off and remained floating on the surface; and as soon

as the splash subsided, I could see him and Israel lying side by side, both wavering with the tremulous movement of the water. O'Brien, though still quite a young man, was very bald. There he lay, with that bald head across the knees of the man who had killed him and the quick fishes steering to and fro over both.

I was now alone upon the ship; the tide had just turned. The sun was within so few degrees of setting that already the shadow of the pines upon the western shore began to reach

right across the anchorage and fall in patterns on the deck. The evening breeze had sprung up, and though it was well warded off by the hill with the two peaks upon the east, the cordage had begun to sing a little softly to itself and the idle sails to rattle to and fro.

I began to see a danger to the ship. The jibs I speedily doused and brought tumbling to the deck, but the

main-sail was a harder matter. Of course, when the schooner canted over, the boom had swung out-board, and the cap of it and a foot or two of sail hung even under water. I thought this made it still more dangerous; yet the strain was so

heavy that I half feared to meddle. At last I got my knife and cut the halyards. The peak dropped

instantly, a great belly of loose canvas floated broad upon the water, and since, pull as I liked, I could not budge the downhall, that was the extent of what I could accomplish. For the rest, the HISPANIOLA must trust to luck, like myself.

By this time the whole anchorage

had fallen into shadow—the last rays, I remember, falling through a glade

of the wood and shining bright as jewels on the flowery mantle of the

wreck. It began to be chill; the tide was rapidly fleeting seaward, the schooner settling more and more on her beam-ends.

I scrambled forward and looked over. It seemed shallow enough, and holding the cut hawser in both hands for a last security, I let myself drop softly overboard. The water scarcely reached my waist; the sand was firm and covered with ripple marks, and I waded ashore in great spirits,

leaving the HISPANIOLA on her side, with her main-sail trailing wide upon the surface of the bay. About the same time, the sun went fairly down and the breeze whistled low in the dusk among the tossing pines.

At least, and at last, I was off the

sea, nor had I returned thence empty-handed. There lay the schooner, clear at last from buccaneers and ready for our own men to board and get to sea again. I had nothing nearer my fancy than to get home to the stockade and boast of my achievements. Possibly I might be blamed a bit for my truantry, but the

recapture of the HISPANIOLA was

a clenching answer, and I hoped that even Captain Smollett would confess I had not lost my time.

So thinking, and in famous spirits, I began to set my face homeward for the block house and my companions. I remembered that the most easterly of the rivers which drain into Captain Kidd's anchorage ran from the two-peaked hill upon my left,

and I bent my course in that direction that I might pass the stream while it was small. The wood was pretty open, and keeping along the lower spurs, I had soon turned the corner of that hill, and not long after waded to

the mid-calf across the watercourse. This brought me near to where I had encountered Ben Gunn, the maroon; and I walked more circumspectly, keeping an eye on every side. The dusk had come nigh hand

completely, and as I opened out the cleft between the two peaks, I became aware of a wavering glow against the sky, where, as I judged, the man of the island was cooking

his supper before a roaring fire. And yet I wondered, in my heart, that he should show himself so careless.

For if I could see this radiance, might it not reach the eyes of Silver himself where he camped upon the

shore among the marshes? Gradually the night fell blacker; it was all I could do to guide myself even roughly towards my destination; the double hill behind me and the Spy-glass on my right hand loomed faint and fainter; the stars were few and pale; and in the

low ground where I wandered I kept tripping among bushes and

rolling into sandy pits.

Suddenly a kind of brightness fell about me. I looked up; a pale glimmer of moonbeams had alighted on the summit of the Spy-glass, and soon after I saw something broad and silvery moving low down behind the trees, and knew the moon had risen.

With this to help me, I passed

rapidly over what remained to me of my journey, and sometimes walking, sometimes running, impatiently drew near to the stockade. Yet, as I began to thread the grove that lies before it, I was not so thoughtless but that I slacked my pace and went a trifle warily. It would have been a poor end of my adventures to get shot down by my own party in mistake. The moon was climbing higher and higher, its light began to fall here

and there in masses through the more open districts of the wood, and right

in front of me a glow of a different colour appeared among the trees. It was red and hot, and now and again it was a little darkened—as it were, the embers of a bonfire smouldering. For the life of me I could not think what it might be.

At last I came right down upon the borders of the clearing. The western end was already steeped in moon-shine; the rest, and the block house itself, still lay in a black shadow chequered with long silvery streaks of light. On the other side of the house an immense fire had burned itself into clear embers and shed a steady, red reverberation, contrasted

strongly with the mellow paleness of the moon. There was not a soul stirring nor a sound beside the noises of the breeze.

I stopped, with much wonder in my heart, and perhaps a little terror also. It had not been our way to build great fires; we were, indeed, by the captain's orders, somewhat niggardly of firewood, and I began to fear that something had gone wrong while I was absent.

I stole round by the eastern end, keeping close in shadow, and at a convenient place, where the darkness was thickest, crossed the palisade.

To make assurance surer, I got upon my hands and knees and crawled, without a sound, towards the corner of the house. As I drew nearer, my heart was suddenly and greatly lightened. It is not a pleasant noise in itself, and I have often complained

of it at other times, but just then it was like music to hear my friends snoring together so loud and peaceful in their sleep. The sea-cry of the watch, that beautiful "All's well," never fell more reassuringly on my ear.

In the meantime, there was no doubt of one thing; they kept an

infamous bad watch. If it had been Silver and his lads that were now creeping in on them, not a soul would have seen daybreak. That was what it was, thought I, to have the captain wounded; and again I blamed myself sharply for leaving them in that danger with so few to mount guard. By this time I had got to the door and stood up. All was dark within, so that I could distinguish nothing by the eye. As for sounds, there was the steady drone of the snorers and a small occasional noise, a flickering or pecking that I could in no way account for.

With my arms before me I walked steadily in. I should lie down in my own place (I thought with a silent chuckle) and enjoy their faces when they found me in the morning.

My foot struck something yielding—it was a sleeper's leg; and he turned

and groaned, but without awaking. And then, all of a sudden, a shrill voice broke forth out of the darkness:

"Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!" and so forth, without pause or change, like the clacking of a tiny mill.

Silver's green parrot, Captain Flint!

It was she whom I had heard pecking at a piece of bark; it was she, keeping better watch than any human being, who thus announced my arrival with her wearisome refrain.

I had no time left me to recover. At the sharp, clipping tone of the parrot, the sleepers awoke and sprang up; and with a mighty oath, the voice of Silver cried, "Who goes?"

I turned to run, struck violently against one person, recoiled, and ran full into the arms of a second, who for his part closed upon and held me tight.

"Bring a torch, Dick," said Silver when my capture was thus assured. And one of the men left the log-house and presently returned with a lighted brand.

# Chapter 27

## Spaanse Dollars

Die Hispaniola het so skuins geleë, dat die maste n hele ent oor die water gehang het, en van waar ek sit, het ek niks onder my gehad as net die water van die baai nie. Hands was nie so hoog op gewees nie, en het dus tussen my en die verskansing geval. Nog eenmaal het hy opgekom, in n mengsel van skuim en bloed, en toe het hy vir altyd gesink. Toe die water weer helder word, kon ek hom sien le op die skoon, wit sand, in die skaduwee van die skip, n Paar visse glip by sy lyf verby. Nou en dan, as die water roer, lyk dit of hy ook be-weeg, asof hy wil opstaan. Maar hy was morsdood, geskiet en verdrink, en die visse sou hom nou eet, op dieselfde plek waar hy van plan gewees het om my te vermoor.

Sodra as ek hiervan oortuig was, voel ek siek, flou en verskrik. Oor my rug en bors stroom die warm bloed af. Waar die mes my skouer aan die mas vasgenael het, brand dit soos n warm yster. En tog was dit nie die pyn wat my so ontstel het nie, want dit kon ek dra sonder om te kla. Maar ek had n vreeslike angs dat ek ook in daardie stil groen water sou afval, langs die lyk van die bootsman.

Ek het met altwee hande vasgeklou, totdat my naels seer was en my oë toegedruk, asof ek die gevaar wou uitsluit. Langsamerhand het ek weer reg geword, my pols klop weer kalmer, en ek kon weer dink.

My eerste gedagte was om die mes uit te trek, maar dit het te vas gesit, of anders het ek nie die moed gehad nie. Ek gril, toe ek net daaraan dink; en, wonderlik genoeg, daardie siddering het vir my die werk gedoen. Die mes het my net effens geraak; dit het net deur n flentertjie van die vel gegaan, en die was ook nou af-geskeur. Die bloed vloei nou wel n bietjie vinniger af, maar ek was weer my eie baas, en sit nog net met my baadjie en hemp vas aan die mas.

Een vinnige ruk, en ek was los. Ek klim nou langs die ander kant van die mas af op die dek, want vir niks ter wêreld sou ek, geskok soos ek was, my weer gewaag het op die touwerk waaruit Israel so kort tevore geval het nie.

Ek gaan toe na onder toe, en doen wat ek kon vir my wond. Dit was pynlik, en bloei nog altyd; maar dit was nie diep nie, en ook nie gevaarlik nie, en ek kon darem my arm gebruik. Toe kyk ek rond, en my oog val op die dooie OBrien. Ek was nou baas op die skip, en ek maak dus dadelik n plan om van die laaste passasier kwyt te raak.

Hy was teen die verskansing aangerol, en daar le hy nou, soos n aaklige, mismaaakte soort pop, lewensgroot, maar sonder kleur of iets

wat aan n mens laat dink. Ek het al soveel bloedige avonture deurgemaak, dat ek nou geen vrees meer voel vir n dooie mens nie, en ek vat hom om die middel, net asof hy n sak semels was, en gooi hom oorboord. Hy val met n swaar plof; die rooi mus glip af en dryf bo op die water. Toe die water weer helder was, kon ek hom en Israel langs mekaar sien lê, en altwee skommel saggies heen en weer met die beweging van die water. OBrien was nog n jong man, en tog so te se kaalkop. Daar lê hy nou, met daardie kaalkop dwarsoor die knieë van die man wat hom vermoor het, en die vissies swem heen en weer oor die twee. Ek was nou alleen aan boord, en die gety was juis aan verander. Die son was amper onder, en die dennebome langs die strand gooi hulle skaduwees dwars oor die ankerplaas tot op die plek. Die aandwindjie het begin te waai, en, al het die heuwel met die twee spits punte dit n bietjie afgekeer, het dit tog deur die toue begin te flui, en die seile heen en weer laat klap.

Ek sien dat die skip in gevaar was. Die kort seile kon ek maklik aftrek, en op die dek laat val, maar met die groot seil het dit nie so gou gegaan nie. Natuurlik, toe die skip gekantel het, het die boom oorboord geswaai, en die punt daarvan, met n stuk van die seil, lê nou onder water. Dit het die werk nog gevaarliker gemaak, en ek was amper bang om daarmee te begin. Eindelik trek ek my mes uit en sny die val deur. Die gaffel kom dadelik na onder toe, en n groot massa los seildoek dryf breed op die water; maar hoe ek ook al trek en beur, ek kon dit nie verder af kry nie, en ek moes dus die Hispaniola aan die genade van die noodlot oorlaat, net soos ekself daaraan oorgelaat was.

Teen die tyd was die hele ankerplaas al in die skaduwee, ek onthou nog goed hoe die laaste strale van die son op die blomme geblink het wat op die ou wrak groei. Dit begin koud word; die gety stroom vinnig die see in, en die Hispaniola sak al hoe vaster op die sand.

Ek klouter oor die kant, en kyk af in die water. Die baai het vir my taamlik vlak gelyk, en ek laat my lyf saggies af langs die afgesnyde ankertou. Die water het skaars tot by my middel gekom; die sand was stewig, en ek loop vol moed deur na die land toe. Agter my lê die Hispaniola op sy kant, met die groot seil wyd uitgesprei op die water. Die son was nou heeltemal onder, en die windjie fluit saggies deur die dennebome.

Eindelik was ek dan tog weer op land, en ek kom ook nie met leë hande terug nie. Want daar le die skip, sonder een van die seerowers aan boord, en klaar vir ons eie mense om aan boord te gaan en die see in te vaar. Ek brand van verlange om by die blokhuis te kom, en te spog oor my dade. Hulle sou my altemit n bietjie bestraf oor my weglopery, maar dit was n kordaatstuk van my om die Hispaniola terug te vat, en selfs Kaptein Smollet sou moet erken dat ek my tyd nie



vermors het nie.

Hoogs tevrede en opgeruimd begin ek te soek na die pad wat my by my maats in die blokhuis sou bring.

Dit val my by dat een van die riviere wat in Kaptein Kidd se ankerplaas uitloop van hierdie spitskop af kom; en ek loop na die kant toe, om die stroom oor te gaan waar dit nog klein was. Ek was gou om die punt van die heuwel, en kort daarna loop ek to by my knieë deur die stroom water.

Ek was nou naby die plek waar ek Ben Gunn ontmoet het, en ek loop baie versigtig, en kyk gedurig rond. Dit was byna donker, en toe ek in die kloof tussen die twee spitse uitkom, sien ek n flikkerlig teen die lug, op die plek waar die eiland-man sy aandete oor n helder vuur kook. Ek was verwonder om te sien dat hy so onver-skillig was. Want as ek die lig kon sien, sou Silver self dit nie ook gewaar nie, daar in sy kamp in die vlei?

Stadigaan word dit donkerder; ek kon met moeite die regte koers hou. Die Verkyker aan my regterhand word al hoe dowwer, die sterre was net hier en daar sigbaar, en ek raak elke slag tussen die bossies vas, of trap in n sandgat, wat ek nie kon sien nie.

Skielik word dit tog ligter om my heen, n bleek skynsel speel oor die top van die Verkyker, en kort daarna sien ek n blink skyf wat tussen die home deur gly. Die maan was op.

Nou kon ek baie vinniger voortgaan; en ek was so ongeduldig om by die blokhuis te kom, dat ek ente gehardloop het. Maar toe ek in die bos kom wat daar digby is, het ek darem versigtig geloop. Dit sou maar treurig wees as ek, na al my avonture, moes doodgeskiet word deur my vriende.

Die maan klim hoër en hoër, en hier en daar val sy lig deur die oop plekke in die bos. Reg voor my was n gloed van n ander kleur. Dit lyk na die as van n uitge-brande vreugdevuur. Ek wis nie wat op aarde ek daarvan moes dink nie.

Eindelik kom ek op die oop plek uit. Die blokhuis lê nog in die skaduwee, met hier en daar n ligstreep daardeur. Aan die ander kant van die huis lê die gloeiende as van n ontsaglike vuur, en die gloed daarvan steek wonderlik af by die bleek strale van die maan. Daar was geen lewendige siel te sien nie, en nie n geluid nie behalwe die gesuis van die windjie.

Verbaas staan ek stil, en n bietjie bang ook. Ons het nooit groot vure gemaak nie; die kaptein was te suinig op die vuurmaakhout; en ek begin te vrees dat daar iets baie verkeerd was.

Ek loop stilletjies om na die ander kant toe, al in die skaduwee langs, en op n plek waar dit pikdonker was, klouter ek oor die omheining. Toe kruip ek op hande en voete, en sonder om die minste geluid te maak, na die hoek van die huis toe. Toe ek nader kom, hoor

ek n geluid wat my hart dadelik laat lekker voel. Dit is nie n al te aangename geluid nie, en ek het al dikwels daaroor gekla; maar op hierdie oomblik was dit soos musiek vir my om my maats so hardop en gerus te hoor snork. Die geroep van die wag op see, daardie lieilike Alles wel, het my nooit meer gerus gestel nie.

Een ding was baie seker: hulle hou baie sleg wag. Sê nou dit was Silver en sy boewe wat hier op hulle afkom, dan sou geen een van hulle ooit weer die daglig gesien het nie. So lyk dit as die kaptein gewond is, dink ek; en weer skaam ek my dat ek hulle daar in die gevaar laat staan het, met so min mans om wag te staan.

Ek was nou by die deur en staan orent. Binne was alles donker, sodat ek niks kon sien nie. Ek hoor net die gereelde gesnork van die slapers, en n ander snaakse geluid, soos n getik of gepik, wat ek nie kon uitmaak nie.

Met my arms voor my uitgesteek, loop ek die blokhuis in. Ek sou reguit na my eie slaapplek toe loop, en dan wou ek graag hulle gesigte sien as hulle my daar kry die volgende more!

My voet raak teen iets wat meegee, dit was die been van een van die slapers; hy draai hom om sonder om wakker te word.

En toe, opeens, klink daar n harde stem uit die duisternis uit:

Spaanse dollars! Spaanse dollars! Spaanse dollars! sonder ophou, soos n meultjie wat maal.

Dit was Silver se groen papegaai, Kaptein Flint! Dit was die ellendige ding wat ek gehoor pik het aan n stuk bas. Hy het beter wag gehou as een van die mense daar, en het nou my koms verrai met sy eentonige refrein.

Daar was geen tyd om te vlug nie. Deur die skerp geluid van die papegaai het al die slapers wakker geword, en spring hulle nou aan al kante op. Met n groot vloek bulder Silver:

Wie is daar?

Ek spring om, stamp teen iemand aan, vlieg weer terug, en loop reg in die arms van n ander vas, wat my nou dadelik styf vasgryp.

Bring n lig Dick, sê Silver, toe ek eindelijk gevang was.

Een van die mans gaan by die deur uit, en kom met n stuk hout aan wat nog brand.

# PART SIX Captain Silver

## Chapter 28

### In the Enemy's Camp

THE red glare of the torch, lighting up the interior of the block house, showed me the worst of my apprehensions realized. The pirates were in possession of the house and stores: there was the cask of cognac, there were the pork and bread, as before, and what tenfold increased my horror, not a sign of any prisoner. I could only judge that all had perished, and my heart smote me sorely that I had not been there to perish with them.

There were six of the buccaneers, all told; not another man was left alive. Five of them were on their feet, flushed and swollen, suddenly called out of the first sleep of drunkenness. The sixth had only risen upon his elbow; he was deadly pale, and the blood-stained bandage round his

head told that he had recently been wounded, and still more recently dressed. I remembered the man who had been shot and had run back among the woods in the great attack, and doubted not that this was he.

The parrot sat, preening her plumage, on Long John's shoulder. He himself, I thought, looked somewhat paler and more stern than I was used to. He still wore the fine broadcloth suit in which he had fulfilled his mission, but it was bitterly the worse for wear, daubed with clay and torn with the sharp briars of the wood.

"So," said he, "here's Jim Hawkins, shiver my timbers! Dropped in, like, eh? Well, come, I take that friendly." And thereupon he sat down across the brandy cask and began to fill a pipe.

"Give me a loan of the link, Dick,"

said he; and then, when he had a good light, "That'll do, lad," he added; "stick the glim in the wood heap; and you, gentlemen, bring yourselves to! You needn't stand up for Mr. Hawkins; HE'LL excuse you, you may lay to that. And so, Jim"—stopping the tobacco—"here you were, and quite a pleasant surprise for poor old John. I see you were smart when first I set my eyes on

you, but this here gets away from me clean, it do."

To all this, as may be well supposed, I made no answer. They had set me with my back against the wall, and I stood there, looking Silver in the face, pluckily enough, I hope, to all outward appearance,

but with black despair in my heart. Silver took a whiff or two of his pipe with great composure and then ran on again.

"Now, you see, Jim, so be as you ARE here," says he, "I'll give you a piece of my mind. I've always liked you, I have, for a lad of spirit, and the picter of my own self when I was young and handsome. I always wanted you to jine and take your share, and die a gentleman, and now, my cock, you've got to. Cap'n Smollett's a fine seaman, as I'll own up to any day, but stiff on discipline.

'Dooty is dooty,' says he, and right he is. Just you keep clear of the cap'n. The doctor himself is gone dead again you—'ungrateful scamp' was what he said; and the short and the long of the whole story is about here: you can't go back to your own lot, for they won't have you; and without you start a third ship's company all by yourself, which might be lonely, you'll have to jine with Cap'n Silver."

So far so good. My friends, then, were still alive, and though I partly believed the truth of Silver's statement, that the cabin party were incensed at me for my desertion, I

was more relieved than distressed by what I heard.

"I don't say nothing as to your being in our hands," continued Silver, "though there you are, and you may lay to it. I'm all for argyment; I never seen good come out o' threatening. If you like the service, well, you'll

jine; and if you don't, Jim, why, you're free to answer no—free and welcome, shipmate; and if fairer can be said by mortal seaman, shiver my sides!"

"Am I to answer, then?" I asked with a very tremulous voice. Through all this sneering talk, I was made to feel the threat of death that overhung me,

and my cheeks burned and my heart beat painfully in my breast.

"Lad," said Silver, "no one's a-pressing of you. Take your bearings. None of us won't hurry you, mate; time goes so pleasant in your company, you see."

"Well," says I, growing a bit bolder, "if I'm to choose, I declare I have a right to know what's what, and why you're here, and where my friends are."

"Wot's wot?" repeated one of the buccaneers in a deep growl. "Ah, he'd be a lucky one as knowed that!" "You'll perhaps batten down your hatches till you're spoke to, my

friend," cried Silver truculently to this speaker. And then, in his first gracious tones, he replied to me, "Yesterday morning, Mr. Hawkins," said he, "in the dog-watch, down came Doctor Livesey with a flag of truce. Says he, 'Cap'n Silver, you're sold out. Ship's gone.' Well, maybe we'd been taking a glass, and a song to help it round. I won't say no. Leastways, none of us had looked out. We looked out, and by thunder,

the old ship was gone! I never seen a pack o' fools look fishier; and you may lay to that, if I tells you that looked the fishiest. 'Well,' says the doctor, 'let's bargain.' We bargained, him and I, and here we are: stores, brandy, block house, the firewood you was thoughtful enough to cut, and in a manner of speaking, the whole blessed boat, from cross-trees to kelson. As for them, they've tramped; I don't know where's they are."

He drew again quietly at his pipe. "And lest you should take it into that head of yours," he went on, "that you was included in the treaty, here's the last word that was said: 'How many are you,' says I, 'to leave?' 'Four,' says he; 'four, and one of us wounded. As for that boy, I don't know where he is, confound him,'

says he, 'nor I don't much care.

We're about sick of him.' These was his words.

"Is that all?" I asked.

"Well, it's all that you're to hear, my son," returned Silver.

"And now I am to choose?"

"And now you are to choose, and you may lay to that," said Silver.

"Well," said I, "I am not such a fool but I know pretty well what I have to look for. Let the worst come to the worst, it's little I care. I've seen too many die since I fell in with you. But there's a thing or two I have to tell you," I said, and by this time I was quite excited; "and the first is this:

here you are, in a bad way—ship lost, treasure lost, men lost, your whole business gone to wreck; and if you want to know who did it—it was I! I was in the apple barrel the night we sighted land, and I heard you, John, and you, Dick Johnson, and Hands, who is now at the bottom of the sea, and told every word you

said before the hour was out. And as for the schooner, it was I who cut her cable, and it was I that killed the men you had aboard of her, and it was I who brought her where you'll never see her more, not one of you. The laugh's on my side; I've had the top of this business from the first; I

no more fear you than I fear a fly. Kill me, if you please, or spare me. But one thing I'll say, and no more; if you spare me, bygoness are bygoness, and when you fellows are in court for piracy, I'll save you all I can. It is for you to choose. Kill another and do yourselves no good, or spare me and keep a witness to save you from the gallows."

I stopped, for, I tell you, I was out of breath, and to my wonder, not a man of them moved, but all sat staring at me like as many sheep. And while they were still staring, I broke out again, "And now, Mr. Silver," I said, "I believe you're the best man here, and if things go to the worst, I'll take it kind of you to let the doctor

know the way I took it."

"I'll bear it in mind," said Silver

with an accent so curious that I could not, for the life of me, decide whether he were laughing at my request or had been favourably affected by my courage.

"I'll put one to that," cried the old mahogany-faced seaman—Morgan by name—whom I had seen in Long John's public-house upon the quays

of Bristol. "It was him that knowed

Black Dog."

"Well, and see here," added the sea-cook. "I'll put another again to that,

by thunder! For it was this same boy that faked the chart from Billy Bones. First and last, we've split upon Jim Hawkins!"

"Then here goes!" said Morgan with an oath.

And he sprang up, drawing his knife as if he had been twenty.

"Avast, there!" cried Silver. "Who are you, Tom Morgan? Maybe you thought you was cap'n here, perhaps. By the powers, but I'll teach you better! Cross me, and you'll go

where many a good man's gone before you, first and last, these thirty year back—some to the yard-arm, shiver my timbers, and some by the board, and all to feed the fishes. There's never a man looked me between the eyes and seen a good day a'terwards, Tom Morgan, you may lay to that."

Morgan paused, but a hoarse murmur rose from the others.

"Tom's right," said one.

"I stood hazing long enough from one," added another. "I'll be hanged if I'll be hazed by you, John Silver." "Did any of you gentlemen want to have it out with ME?" roared Silver, bending far forward from his position on the keg, with his pipe

still glowing in his right hand. "Put a name on what you're at; you ain't

dumb, I reckon. Him that wants shall get it. Have I lived this many years, and a son of a rum puncheon cock

his hat athwart my hawse at the latter end of it? You know the way; you're all gentlemen o' fortune, by your account. Well, I'm ready. Take a cutlass, him that dares, and I'll see

the colour of his inside, crutch and all, before that pipe's empty."

Not a man stirred; not a man answered.

"That's your sort, is it?" he added, returning his pipe to his mouth.

"Well, you're a gay lot to look at, anyway. Not much worth to fight, you ain't. P'r'aps you can understand

King George's English. I'm cap'n here by 'lection. I'm cap'n here because I'm the best man by a long sea-mile. You won't fight, as

gentlemen o' fortune should; then, by thunder, you'll obey, and you may lay to it! I like that boy, now; I never seen a better boy than that. He's more a man than any pair of rats of you in this here house, and what I say is this: let me see him that'll lay a hand on him—that's what I say, and you may lay to it."

There was a long pause after this. I stood straight up against the wall, my heart still going like a sledge-hammer, but with a ray of hope now shining in my bosom. Silver leant back against the wall, his arms crossed, his pipe in the corner of his mouth, as calm as though he had been in church; yet his eye kept wandering furtively, and he kept the tail of it on his unruly followers. They, on their part, drew gradually together towards the far end of the block house, and the low hiss of their whispering sounded in my ear continuously, like a stream. One after another, they would look up, and the red light of the torch would fall for a second on their nervous faces; but it was not towards me, it was towards Silver that they turned their eyes.

"You seem to have a lot to say," remarked Silver, spitting far into the air. "Pipe up and let me hear it, or lay to."

"Ax your pardon, sir," returned one of the men; "you're pretty free with some of the rules; maybe you'll kindly keep an eye upon the rest. This crew's dissatisfied; this crew don't vally bullying a marlin-spike; this crew has its rights like other crews, I'll make so free as that; and by your own rules, I take it we can talk together. I ax your pardon, sir, acknowledging you for to be captaing at this present; but I claim my right, and steps outside for a council."

And with an elaborate sea-salute, this fellow, a long, ill-looking, yellow-eyed man of five and thirty, stepped coolly towards the door and disappeared out of the house. One after another the rest followed his example, each making a salute as he passed, each adding some apology. "According to rules," said one. "Forecastle council," said Morgan. And so with one remark or another all marched out and left Silver and me alone with the torch.

The sea-cook instantly removed his pipe.

"Now, look you here, Jim Hawkins," he said in a steady whisper that was no more than audible, "you're within half a plank of death, and what's a long sight worse, of torture. They're going to throw me off. But, you

mark, I stand by you through thick and thin. I didn't mean to; no, not till you spoke up. I was about desperate to lose that much blunt, and be hanged into the bargain. But I see you was the right sort. I says to myself, you stand by Hawkins, John, and Hawkins'll stand by you. You're his last card, and by the living thunder, John, he's yours! Back to back, says I. You save your witness,

and he'll save your neck!"

I began dimly to understand. "You mean all's lost?" I asked. "Aye, by gum, I do!" he answered. "Ship gone, neck gone—that's the size of it. Once I looked into that bay, Jim Hawkins, and seen no schooner—well, I'm tough, but I gave out. As for that lot and their council, mark me, they're outright fools and cowards. I'll save your life—if so be as I can—from them. But, see here, Jim—tit for tat—you save Long John from swinging."

I was bewildered; it seemed a thing so hopeless he was asking—he, the old buccaneer, the ringleader throughout.

"What I can do, that I'll do," I said. "It's a bargain!" cried Long John. "You speak up plucky, and by thunder, I've a chance!"

He hobbled to the torch, where it stood propped among the firewood, and took a fresh light to his pipe. "Understand me, Jim," he said, returning. "I've a head on my shoulders, I have. I'm on squire's side now. I know you've got that ship safe somewheres. How you done it, I don't know, but safe it is. I guess Hands and O'Brien turned soft. I never much believed in neither of THEM. Now you mark me. I ask no questions, nor I won't let others. I know when a game's up, I do; and I know a lad that's staunch. Ah, you that's young—you and me might have done a power of good together!"

He drew some cognac from the cask into a tin cannikin.

"Will you taste, messmate?" he asked; and when I had refused: "Well, I'll take a drain myself, Jim," said he. "I need a caulker, for there's trouble on hand. And talking o' trouble, why did that doctor give me the chart, Jim?"

My face expressed a wonder so unaffected that he saw the needlessness of further questions.

"Ah, well, he did, though," said he. "And there's something under that, no doubt—something, surely, under that, Jim—bad or good."

And he took another swallow of the brandy, shaking his great fair head like a man who looks forward to the worst.

DEEL VI: KAPTEIN SILVER



# Chapter 28

## In die kamp van die Vyand

Toen die rooi lig van die toorts in die blokhuis val, sien ek dadelik dat my ergste vrees gegrond was. Die seeskuimers het die blokhuis met al ons voorraad in hulle besit; daar staan die vat met konjak, daar was die varkveis en die brood, net soos voorheen; en, tot my ontsteltenis, nie n teken van n prisonier nie. Ek kon maar net dink dat hulle almal doodgemaak was, en ek het net bitter spyt dat ek nie ook daar gewees het om met hulle saam te sterf nie.

Daar was ses seerowers, altesaam; nie een meer het oorgebly nie. Vyf daarvan was op die been, met rooi, dik gesigte, want hulle was skielik uit hulle dronkman-slaap wakker gemaak. Die sesde leun op sy elmboog: hy was doodsbleek, en aan die kopdoek kon ek sien dat hy kort tevore gewond was. Ek onthou die man wat n koeël gekry het in die groot aanval, en wat toe terug gehardloop het in die bosse in. Dit was ongetwyfeld hy.

Die papegaai sit op Long John se skouer en stryk sy vere glad. John self was effens bleker en ernstiger as gewoonlik, so lyk dit vir my. Hy dra nog die fyn lakense pak waarin hy na die blokhuis toe gekom het, maar dit was bitterlik verniel, vol modder-spatsels, en verskeur aan die dorings van die bosse.

„So, sê hy, hier is Jim Hawkins, so wraggies waar! Kom kuier, nê? Dit is nogal vriendelik van jou.

En toe gaan sit hy op die brandewynvat, en begin sy pyp te stop.

Bring die lig hiernatoe, Dick, sê hy; en toe hy n goeie lig het, gaan hy voort, „julle kan maar gerus weer gaan le, maats, Mnr. Hawkins sal julle dit nie kwalik neem nie, dit is seker. En toe, Jim, hier is jy, en dis waarlik n verrassing vir arme ou John, hoor! Ek het altyd geweet jy is n knap seun, maar hierdie stukkie slaan my darem regtig dronk.

Dis te begrype dat ek op dit alles niks geantwoord het nie. Hulle het my met my rug teen die muur gesit, en daar staan ek nou, en kyk Silver in die gesig, moedig genoeg, hoop ek, wat die uiterlike betref, maar met wanhoop in my siel. Silver het doodbedaard n paar trekke aan sy pyp gegee, en begin toe weer:

Sien jy, Jim, nou dat jy tog hier is, sal ek jou maar reguit vertel wat ek van die saak dink. Ek het altyd baie van jou gedink, omdat jy son wakker seun is, kompleet net soos ek, toe ek jonk en mooi was. Ek wou altyd gehad het dat jy by ons moes aansluit, en jou aandeel kry, en soos n groot meneer leef, en nou, matie, sal jy moet. Kaptein Smollett is n eersteklas seeman, dit sal ek enige dag erken, maar hy is

streng. Plig is plig, sê hy altyd, en hy is reg. Selfs die dokter is teen jou. On-dankbare niksnuts is wat hy jou genoem het. Kortom, Jim, jy kan nie na jou eie mense toe teruggaan nie, want hulle wil jou nie he nie. Dus, as jy nie alleen wil rond dwaal nie, moet jy by Kaptein Silver aansluit.

My vriende was dan tog nog in die land der lewende, en al het ek dit geglo dat hulle baie kwaad was vir my, het Silver se woorde n pak van my hart afgeneem.

Ek praat nie eers daarvan dat jy in ons hande geval het nie, want dit kan jy self sien, sê hy. Ek wil die saak skik. Ek het nog nooit gesien dat daar enige nut was in dreigemente nie. As jy lus het om aan te sluit, goed, so nie, dan is jy vry om te sê nee vry en welkom, maar; en die duiwel haal my as ek dit mooier kan sê!

Dus moet ek antwoord? vra ek met bewende stem. Onder al hierdie gepraat deur, het ek goed verstaan dat die dood my dreig. My wange gloei, en my hart klop pynlik in my binneste.

Moenie jou oorhaas nie, seun, sê Silver. Bedink jou goed. Ons sal jou nie aanjaag nie; die tyd gaan in jou geselskap so aangenaam verby, weet jy.

Wel, sê ek, en ek skep n bietjie meer moed, as ek dan moet kies, het ek tog seker die reg om te weet wat is wat, en hoekom julle hier is, en waar my vriende is. Wat is wat? brom een van die seerowers. Ja, dit wil ek ook graag weet.

Hou jou mond tot jy gevra word, snou Silver die spreker af. En toe antwoord hy my op dieselfde min-same toon soos voorheen. Gisteroggend, Mnr. Hawkins, in die hondewag, kom Dr. Livesey na ons toe met n wit vlag. Kaptein Silver, sê hy, jy is verraaier. Die skip is weg. Wel, altemit het ons n glasie te veel in gehad, ek sal nie stry nie. Ons kyk, en, sowaar, die ou skip was weg! Ek het nog nooit n groter klomp gekke gesien nie. En ek, wat jou dit vertel, was die grootste gek van almal. Die dokter en ek het toe n ooreenkoms getref, en hier is ons nou: kos, brandewyn, blokhuis, die brandhout, wat julle so sorgvuldig gekap het, en, om so te sê, die hele skip is in ons besit. Wat van hulle geword het, weet ek nie. Hulle is weg.

Hy gee bedaard n paar trekkies aan sy pyp, en gaan toe voort:

En as jy miskien dink dat jy ook in daardie verdrag ingesluit is, sal ek jou vertel wat die dokter se laaste woorde was.

Hoeveel van julle verlaat die blokhuis? het ek gevra. Vier, sê die dokter, en een daarvan is gewond.

Wat daardie seun betref, ek weet nie waar hy is nie, en ek gee ook nie om nie. Ons is al net moeg van hom. Dit was sy woorde.

Is dit al? vra ek.

Dis al wat jy sal hoor, my seun, antwoord Silver. En nou moet ek kies?

En nou moet jy kies, en dadelik ook.

Wel, sê ek, ek is nie so onnosel dat ek nie weet wat my te wagte staan nie. Laat die ergste maar kom, ek gee nie om nie. Ek het al te veel mense sien sterf, vandat ek jou leer ken het. Maar daar is darem n paar dingetjies wat ek jou wil vertel. (Ek was by die tyd baie opgewonde). Die eerste is dit: julle is in n baie treurige toestand: skip weg, skat verloor, mense verloor; julle hele plan is in duie. En as jy wil weet wie dit gedoen het, dit was ek! Ek was in die appelvat die nag toe ons vir die eerste keer land gesien het, en ek het jou gehoor praat, John, en jou, Dick Johnson, en Hands, wat nou op die boom van die see le, en voor n uur om was, het ek elke woord oorvertel. Dit was ek wat die kabel van die skip afgesny het, en die twee mans doodgemaak het wat julle daar gelaat het, en ek het die skip op n plek gebring waar julle dit nooit weer sal sien nie, nie een van julle nie. Ek lag julle uit. Van die begin af was ek bo-baas in hierdie spulletjie, en ek is vir jou net so min bang as vir n muggie. Maak my maar dood, as jy lus het, of spaar my. Nog een ding wil ek sê, en dit is: as jy my lewe spaar, sal ek alles vergeet wat verby is, en as julle kerele een dag moet voorkom vir seerowery, dan sal ek my bes doen vir julle. Kies nou maar. Maak nog een dood, en trek daar geen voordeel van nie, of spaar my en behou n getuie om julle van die galg te red.

Ek bly toe stil, want ek was waarlik uitasem. Tot my verbasing het nie een van hulle geroer nie, maar hulle sit my en aanstaar soos n trop skape. En toe hulle nog so sit, begin ek weer:

Mnr. Silver, ek glo jy is die beste man hier. As die ergste met my gebeur, sal ek bly wees as jy die dokter wil vertel dat ek my einde sonder vrees genader het. Ek sal dit onthou, sê Silver, op so n wonderlike toon, dat ek om die dood nie kon uitmaak of hy die spot dryf met my versoek nie, en of my moed n gunstige indruk op hom gemaak het nie.

Ek kan nog iets daarby sê, skree die ou mahonie-hout-gesig met die naam van Morgan, wat ek op Bristol in Long John se kantien gesien het. Dit is hy wat Black Dog geken het.

Ja, weet julle, dit was hierdie selfde seun wat die kaart van Billy Bones af gesteel het, voeg die kok daarby. Van begin tot end is dit Jim Hawkins gewees wat ons planne verydel het!

Dus, hier gaat hy! sê Morgan met n vloek.

En hy spring met die oop mes na my toe, asof hy n jongkerel van twintig was.

Weg daar! skree Silver, wie is jy, Tom Morgan? Altemit het jy gedink jy is kaptein? By my siel, ek sal jou beter leer! Kom my te na, en jy sal gaan waar meer as een voor jou gegaan het in die laaste dertig jaar die een aan die mas gehang, die ander op n plank in die

see in laat loop, en almal vandag kos vir die visse. Morgan deins terug, maar die ander brom onder mekaar.

Dis reg, Tom, sê een.

Ek het lank genoeg onder n baas gestaan, sê iemand anders. Ek sal wraggies nie onder jou staan nie, John Silver.

Wil een van julle kerele dit altemit met my uitveg? brul Silver, en hy buig ver vooroor van die vat af, met die pyp nog in sy regterhand. „Se maar net wat julle

wil hê. Of is julle stom? Julle ken die gewoonte; want julle is mos kastig almal seerowers gewees. Ek is klaar. Laat enigeen wat dit wil waag sy dolk neem, en ek sal die kleur van sy binnegoed sien, kruk of nie kruk nie, voor my pyp leeg is.

Niemand beweeg nie; niemand antwoord nie.

So, dan is julle die soort! spot hy hulle, en steek weer sy pyp in sy mond. „n Mooi klomp om na te kyk, dis waar. Maar julle beteken niks as daar moet geveg word nie. Miskien kan julle nie goed Engels verstaan nie. Ek is kaptein hier, en dit deur julle eie keuse. Ek is kaptein omdat ek n beter seeman is as enigeen van julle. Julle wil nie veg soos dit fortuinsoekers pas nie, nê? Wel, dan sal julle wraggies gehoorsaam! Ek hou van hierdie seun; ek het nog nooit n knapper seun gesien nie. Hy is meer van n man as enige twee van julle, rotte. En ek kan julle een ding sê: die een wat sy hand aan hom sit, sal dit met my te doen kry.

Vir n lang ruk sê niemand n woord nie. Ek staan regop teen die muur, en my hart klop nog soos n voor-hamer, maar nou was daar tog n straaltjie hoop in. Silver leun agteroor teen die muur met sy arms gevou, en die pyp in die hoek van sy mond, so kalm of hy in die kerk sit; maar tog hou hy een oog op sy oproerige volgelinge. Hulle gaan al hoe meer op een hoop staan in die hoek van die blokhuis, en hulle gefluister klink in my ore soos n strom wat bruis. Een na die ander kyk op, en die rooi lig van die toorts val dan vir n oomblik op hulle benoude gesigte; maar hulle kyk nie na my nie, maar na Silver.

Dit lyk of julle baie te sê het, merk Silver op, en hy spuug ver op in die lug. Laat ek hoor wat dit is, of bly stil.

Ekskuus, kaptein, sê een van die mans, maar jy is n bietjie al te vry met party van die reels. Dit sou goed

wees as jy daar n ogie op hou. Hierdie bemanning is ontevrede; ons gee nie n bloue duit om jou uitskel nie; ons het ons regte net soos enige ander bemanning. Ek vra jou verlof, omdat jy op die oomblik kaptein is, maar ek sê ons het die reg om buite te gaan raad hou.

Met n deftige groet stap hierdie kerele, n lang, lelike vent van sowat vyf en dertig, na die deur toe, en verdwyn in die donker. Een na die ander het sy voorbeeld gevolg; elkeen groet as hy verbykom; elkeen maak n ekskuus. Volgens die reëls, sê een. Vergadering, sê Morgan.

Eindelik staan Silver en ek alleen in die lig van die toorts.

Die kok neem dadelik sy pyp uit sy mond.

Kyk hier, Jim Hawkins, sê hy, so saggies dat ek hom byna nie kon verstaan nie, jy moet weet dat daar maar net n dun plankie tussen jou en die dood staan, en, wat baie erger is, marteling. Hulle gaan my afsit. Maar, wees maar gerus, ek sal by jou staan deur dik en dun. Dit was nie eers my plan gewees nie; nee, nie voor jy gepraat het nie. Ek was so kwaad oor al die goud wat ek moes verloor, en darem nog gehang word ook. Maar ek het gesien jy is die regte soort, en ek sê vir myself: Spring jy vir Hawkins in die bres, John, en hy sal dieselfde vir jou doen. Jy is sy laaste kaart, en, by jou siel, John, hy is jou! Rug aan rug, sê ek. Red jy jou getuie, en hy sal jou nek red!

Ek begin die toestand te begryp.

Jy meen alles is verloor?

Ja, wraggies, ek dink so, sê hy. Skip weg, hals in gevaar. Sodra as ek na daardie baai gekyk het, en geen skip daar gesien het nie, wel, ek is taai, Jim, maar toe het ek ingeggee. Die spul daarbuite is sommer n klomp gekke en lafaards. Ek sal my bes doen om jou uit hulle kloue te hou. Maar dan moet jy belowe om Long John van die galg af te hou.

Ek was glad verslae. Dit lyk son hopelose ding om van my te verlang hy, die ou seeskuimer, die belhamel in alles.

Wat ek kan doen, dit sal ek doen, sê ek.

Top! sê Long John. Jy kan goed praat, en, sowaar as wat, ek het n kans!

Hy spring op een been na die lig toe, en steek weer sy pyp aan.

Verstaan my goed, Jim, sê hy toe hy terugkom. Ek het n kop op my skouers, dit moet jy weet. Ek is nou aan die squire se kant. Ek weet jy het die skip ęrens op n veilige plek gebring. Hoe jy dit gedoen het, weet ek nie. Hands en OBrien het seker gehendsop. Ek het nooit een van die twee vertrou nie. Ek sal jou geen vrae vra nie, en ook nie toelaat dat die ander dit doen nie. Ek weet wanneer ek verloor het, en ek weet ook wanneer ek n knap seun voor my het. A, jy wat jonk is hoeveel goed sou jy en ek tesame nie kon gedoen het nie!

Hy tap n bietjie konjak uit die vat in n blikbekertjie. Wil jy proe, maat? vra hy. En toe ek bedank, sê hy: Wel, ek sal self n slukkie neem, Jim. Ek het versterking nodig, want daar is onweer in die lug. Maar sê my bietjie, Jim, hoekom het die dokter vir my daardie kaart gegee?

Hy kon op my verbaasde gesig lees dat ek daar niks van verstaan nie.

Ja, hy het dit gegee, sê hy. En daar moet iets agter skuil, Jim, goed of kwaad.

Hy neem nog n sluk brandewyn, en skud sy groot blonde kop soos n man wat die ergste verwag.

# Chapter 29

## The Black Spot Again

THE council of buccaneers had lasted some time, when one of them re-entered the house, and with a repetition of the same salute, which had in my eyes an ironical air, begged for a moment's loan of the torch. Silver briefly agreed, and this emissary retired again, leaving us together in the dark.

"There's a breeze coming, Jim," said Silver, who had by this time adopted quite a friendly and familiar tone.

I turned to the loophole nearest me and looked out. The embers of the great fire had so far burned themselves out and now glowed so low and duskily that I understood why these conspirators desired a torch. About half-way down the slope to the stockade, they were collected in a group; one held the light, another was on his knees in their midst, and I saw the blade of an

open knife shine in his hand with varying colours in the moon and torchlight. The rest were all somewhat stooping, as though watching the manoeuvres of this last. I could just make out that he had a book as well as a knife in his hand, and was still wondering how anything so incongruous had come in their possession when the kneeling figure rose once more to his feet and the whole party began to move together towards the house.

"Here they come," said I; and I returned to my former position, for it seemed beneath my dignity that they should find me watching them.

"Well, let 'em come, lad—let 'em come," said Silver cheerily. "I've still a shot in my locker."

The door opened, and the five men, standing huddled together just inside, pushed one of their number forward. In any other circumstances it would have been comical to see his slow advance, hesitating as he set down each foot, but holding his closed right hand in front of him.

"Step up, lad," cried Silver. "I won't eat you. Hand it over, lubber. I know the rules, I do; I won't hurt a depytation."

Thus encouraged, the buccaneer stepped forth more briskly, and having passed something to Silver, from hand to hand, slipped yet more smartly back again to his companions.

The sea-cook looked at what had been given him.

"The black spot! I thought so," he observed. "Where might you have got the paper? Why, hillo! Look here, now; this ain't lucky! You've gone and cut this out of a Bible. What fool's cut a Bible?"

"Ah, there!" said Morgan. "There! Wot did I say? No good'll come o' that, I said."

"Well, you've about fixed it now, among you," continued Silver.

"You'll all swing now, I reckon. What soft-headed lubber had a Bible?"

"It was Dick," said one.

"Dick, was it? Then Dick can get to prayers," said Silver. "He's seen his slice of luck, has Dick, and you may lay to that."

But here the long man with the yellow eyes struck in.

"Belay that talk, John Silver," he said. "This crew has tipped you the black spot in full council, as in dooty bound; just you turn it over, as in dooty bound, and see what's wrote there. Then you can talk."

"Thanky, George," replied the sea-cook. "You always was brisk for business, and has the rules by heart, George, as I'm pleased to see. Well, what is it, anyway? Ah! 'Deposed'— that's it, is it? Very pretty wrote, to be sure; like print, I swear. Your hand o' write, George? Why, you

was gettin' quite a leadin' man in this here crew. You'll be cap'n next, I shouldn't wonder. Just oblige me with that torch again, will you? This pipe don't draw."

"Come, now," said George, "you don't fool this crew no more. You're a funny man, by your account; but you're over now, and you'll maybe step down off that barrel and help vote."

"I thought you said you knowed the rules," returned Silver contemptuously. "Leastways, if you don't, I do; and I wait here—and I'm still your cap'n, mind—till you outs with your grievances and I reply; in the meantime, your black spot ain't worth a biscuit. After that, we'll see."

"Oh," replied George, "you don't be under no kind of apprehension; WE'RE all square, we are. First, you've made a hash of this cruise—you'll be a bold man to say no to

that. Second, you let the enemy out o' this here trap for nothing. Why did

they want out? I dunno, but it's pretty plain they wanted it. Third, you wouldn't let us go at them upon the march. Oh, we see through you, John Silver; you want to play booty, that's what's wrong with you. And then, fourth, there's this here boy."

"Is that all?" asked Silver quietly. "Enough, too," retorted George. "We'll all swing and sun-dry for your bungling."

"Well now, look here, I'll answer these four p'int's; one after another I'll answer 'em. I made a hash o' this cruise, did I? Well now, you all know what I wanted, and you all know if that had been done that we'd

'a been aboard the HISPANIOLA this night as ever was, every man of

us alive, and fit, and full of good plum-duff, and the treasure in the hold of her, by thunder! Well, who crossed me? Who forced my hand, as was the lawful cap'n? Who tipped me the black spot the day we landed and began this dance? Ah, it's a fine dance—I'm with you there—and looks mighty like a hornpipe in a rope's

end at Execution Dock by London town, it does. But who done it? Why, it was Anderson, and Hands, and

you, George Merry! And you're the last above board of that same meddling crew; and you have the

Davy Jones's insolence to up and stand for cap'n over me—you, that sank the lot of us! By the powers! But this tops the stiffest yarn to nothing."

Silver paused, and I could see by the faces of George and his late comrades that these words had not been said in vain.

"That's for number one," cried the accused, wiping the sweat from his brow, for he had been talking with a vehemence that shook the house.

"Why, I give you my word, I'm sick

to speak to you. You've neither sense nor memory, and I leave it to fancy where your mothers was that let you

come to sea. Sea! Gentlemen o' fortune! I reckon tailors is your trade."

"Go on, John," said Morgan. "Speak up to the others."

"Ah, the others!" returned John. "They're a nice lot, ain't they? You say this cruise is bungled. Ah! By gum, if you could understand how bad it's bungled, you would see! We're that near the gibbet that my neck's stiff with thinking on it. You've seen 'em, maybe, hanged in chains, birds about 'em, seamen

p'inting 'em out as they go down with the tide. 'Who's that?' says one.

'That! Why, that's John Silver. I

knowed him well,' says another. And you can hear the chains a-jangle as you go about and reach for the other buoy. Now, that's about where we are, every mother's son of us, thanks to him, and Hands, and Anderson,

and other ruination fools of you. And if you want to know about number four, and that boy, why, shiver my timbers, isn't he a hostage? Are we

a-going to waste a hostage? No, not us; he might be our last chance, and I shouldn't wonder. Kill that boy? Not me, mates! And number three? Ah, well, there's a deal to say to number three. Maybe you don't count it nothing to have a real college doctor

to see you every day—you, John, with your head broke—or you, George Merry, that had the ague shakes upon you not six hours ago, and has your eyes the colour of lemon peel to this same moment on the clock? And maybe, perhaps, you didn't know there was a consort coming either? But there is, and not



so long till then; and we'll see who'll be glad to have a hostage when it comes to that. And as for number two, and why I made a bargain— well, you came crawling on your knees to me to make it—on your knees you came, you was that downhearted—and you'd have starved too if I hadn't—but that's a trifle! You look there—that's why!" And he cast down upon the floor a paper that I instantly recognized— none other than the chart on yellow paper, with the three red crosses, that I had found in the oilcloth at the bottom of the captain's chest. Why the doctor had given it to him was more than I could fancy.

But if it were inexplicable to me, the appearance of the chart was incredible to the surviving mutineers. They leaped upon it like cats upon a mouse. It went from hand to hand, one tearing it from another; and by the oaths and the cries and the childish laughter with which they accompanied their examination, you would have thought, not only they were fingering the very gold, but were at sea with it, besides, in safety.

"Yes," said one, "that's Flint, sure enough. J. F., and a score below, with a clove hitch to it; so he done ever."

"Mighty pretty," said George. "But how are we to get away with it, and us no ship."

Silver suddenly sprang up, and supporting himself with a hand against the wall: "Now I give you warning, George," he cried. "One more word of your sauce, and I'll call you down and fight you. How? Why, how do I know? You had ought to tell me that—you and the rest, that lost me my schooner, with your interference, burn you! But not you, you can't; you hain't got the invention of a cockroach. But civil you can speak, and shall, George Merry, you may lay to that."

"That's fair enow," said the old man

Morgan.

"Fair! I reckon so," said the sea-cook. "You lost the ship; I found the treasure. Who's the better man at that? And now I resign, by thunder! Elect whom you please to be your cap'n now; I'm done with it." "Silver!" they cried. "Barbecue forever! Barbecue for cap'n!"

"So that's the toon, is it?" cried the cook. "George, I reckon you'll have to wait another turn, friend; and lucky for you as I'm not a revengeful man. But that was never my way. And now, shipmates, this black spot? 'Tain't much good now, is it? Dick's crossed his luck and spoiled his Bible, and that's about all."

"It'll do to kiss the book on still, won't it?" growled Dick, who was evidently uneasy at the curse he had brought upon himself.

“A Bible with a bit cut out!” returned Silver derisively. “Not it. It don’t bind no more’n a ballad-book.” “Don’t it, though?” cried Dick with a sort of joy. “Well, I reckon that’s worth having too.”

“Here, Jim—here’s a cur’osity for you,” said Silver, and he tossed me the paper.

It was around about the size of a crown piece. One side was blank, for it had been the last leaf; the other contained a verse or two of Revelation—these words among the rest, which struck sharply home upon my mind: “Without are dogs and murderers.” The printed side had been blackened with wood ash, which already began to come off and soil my fingers; on the blank side had been written with the same material the one word “Depposed.” I have that curiosity beside me at this moment, but not a trace of writing now remains beyond a single scratch, such as a man might make with his thumb-nail.

That was the end of the night’s business. Soon after, with a drink all round, we lay down to sleep, and the outside of Silver’s vengeance was to put George Merry up for sentinel and threaten him with death if he should prove unfaithful.

It was long ere I could close an eye, and heaven knows I had matter enough for thought in the man whom I had slain that afternoon, in my own most perilous position, and above all, in the remarkable game that I saw Silver now engaged upon— keeping the mutineers together with one hand and grasping with the other after every means, possible and impossible, to make his peace and save his miserable life. He himself slept peacefully and snored aloud, yet my heart was sore for him, wicked as he was, to think on the dark perils that environed and the shameful gibbet that awaited him.

# Chapter 29

## Nog eens die Swart Kol

Die vergadering van die seerowers het n rukkie ge-duur, toe een van hulle weer by die deur inkom, en met dieselfde saluut, wat in my oog n bietjie spotagtig lyk, vra of hy vir n oomblik die lig kon kry. Silver gee kortaf sy toestemming, en die boodskapper gaan weer uit. Silver en ek bly alleen agter in die donker.

Die storm kom nader, Jim, sê Silver, wat nou n baie vriendelike en gemeensame toon aanneem as hy met my praat.

Ek kyk deur die skietgat wat naaste aan my was. Die groot vuur was so te sê uitgebrand, en dit gee nog net n flou skynsel, sodat ek kon verstaan waarom die same-sweerders n lig kom vra het. Hulle staan op n klompie, omtrent halfpad na die heining toe; een hou die lig vas; een van die ander was op sy knieë tussen hulle, en ek kon n mes sien blink in sy hand. Die ander staan almal en kyk. Ek kon sien dat hy n boek ook in sy hand het; en ek wonder nog hoe hulle so iets in hulle besit gekry het, toe die man wat kniel weer orent kom, en die hele groep aanstap blokhuis toe.

Daar kom hulle, sê ek, en ek gaan weer op my plek teen die muur staan, want ek wou nie he dat hulle moet dink ek loer hulle af nie.

Laat hulle kom, laat hulle almal kom, sê Silver ewe opgeruimd. Ek het nog n pyl in my koker.

Die deur gaan oop, en die vyf mans bly staan net in die opening, en stoot toe een van die klompie vooruit. Onder ander omstandighede sou dit komieklik gelyk het om hom te sien aankom, voetjie vir voetjie, die regterhand reg voor hom uitgesteek.

Kom maar hier, sê Silver. Ek sal jou nie opeet nie.

Gee dit hier, man. Ek ken die reels, en ek weet hoe om n deputasie te ontvang.

Op die aanmoediging stap die seerower n bietjie vinniger vooruit, en nadat hy iets in Silver se hand gestop het, loop hy nog vinniger na sy maats toe terug.

Silver bekyk nou die ding wat hy gekry het.

Die Swart Kol! Ek het dit verwag, sê hy. Maar waar het julle die papier vandaan gehaal? O, kyk hier, dit is ongelukkig! Julle het dit uit n Bybel geskeur. Wie was so dwaas om dit te doen?

Sien julle nou? Ek het dit mos gesê. Daar kan nooit iets goeds van kom nie, sê Morgan.

Wel, sê Silver, nou is dit klaar met julle. Nou sal julle almal gehang word. Watter esel onder julle het n Bybel? ‘

Dick, se een.

So, was dit Dick? Dan kan Dick maar begin te bid, se Silver. Dis uit met sy geluk, daar kan hy seker van wees.

Maar hier val die lang man met die geel oë hom in die rede: . Skei uit met jou praatjies, John Silver, se hy, ons het jou eenparig tot die Swart Kol veroordeel. Doen jy ook nou jou plig, en kyk aan die ander kant wat daar geskrywe staan. Dan kan jy praat.

Dankie, George, antwoord Silver. Jy was altyd rats en by die hand, en jy ken die reels ook uit jou hoof, George, ek is bly om dit te sien. Wel, wat staan daar? „Afgesit. So, is dit die plan? Baie mooi geskrywe ook, hoor; ek sweer dit lyk na drukletters. Jou handskrif, George? Wel, jy word al heeltemal n hoofman van die bende. Ek sal my niks verwonder as jy nog kaptein word nie! Gee bietjie vir my daardie lig aan, my pyp wil nie trek nie.

Kom, se George, jy kan ons nie langer vir die gek hou nie. Klim af van daardie vat af, en help stem.

Ek dog julle ken die reels? antwoord Silver uit die hoogte. In elk geval ken ek hulle; en ek bly hier, want ek is nog kaptein, dit moet julle weet, tot ek eers al die griewe gehoor het wat julle teen my het. En in die tussentyd is julle Swart Kol nie n oulap werd nie.

O, antwoord George, moenie bang wees nie, ons het volkome reg in wat ons doen. Yereers het jy hierdie hele tog bederwe, jy durf dit nie ontken nie. In die tweede plek het jy die vyand uit hierdie val laat ontsnap, puur verniet. Hoekom wou hulle uit? Dit weet ek nie, maar dit is duidelik dat hulle baie bly was om weg te kom. In die derde plek, jy wou ons nie toelaat om hulle op pad aan te val nie. O, ons sien dwarsdeur jou, John Silver; jy is vals, dit is wat jou makeer. En dan, in die vierde plek, die seun hier.

„Is jy klaar? vra Silver bedaard.

Ja, en dit is genoeg om ons almal te laat hang, antwoord George.

Wel, kyk hier, ek sal al vier punte beantwoord, een vir een. Ek het die tog bederwe, ne? Julle het almal geweet wat ek wou he; en julle weet ook dat, as dit gebeur.het, ons vanaand almal veilig aan boord van die Hispaniola sou gewees het, almal lewendig en gesond, met n voile maag, en met die skat binne in die skip. En wie het my verhinder? Wie het vir my die Swart Kol gegee, die dag toe ons geland het? Ja, die poppe dans nou, en ek moet se dis n mooi dans: dit lyk baie na n horrelpyp aan n entjie tou by Execution Dock, Londen. En wie het dit aan die gang gesit? Jy, George Merry, en Anderson, en Hands! En jy is die enigste een van daardie drie wat nog bokant die grond is: en dan het jy nog die duiwelse astrantheid om jou lyf kaptein te hou bokant my jy, wat ons almal in die ongeluk gedompel het! By my siel, dit is die grofste grap wat ek al ooit gehoor het.

Silver bly stil, en ek kon aan die ander se gesigte sien dat hy nie

verniet gepraat het nie.

Dit is nommer een, gaan hy voort, en hy vee die sweet van sy voorkop af, want hy het so geweldig geskreeu, dat die mure antwoord gee, Om die waarheid te sê, voel ek amper te vies om met julle te praat. Julle het geen verstand nie, en nog minder geheue. Ek wonder wat julle moeders makeer het om julle see toe te laat kom. Seerowers! Julle sou meer geskik wees vir klere-makers.

Toe, gaan aan, John, sê Morgan. Wat van die ander punte?

Ja, die ander! sê John. Dis n mooi klompie, nê? Julle sê die tog is bederwe. En ek sê vir julle, ons is so na aan die galg, dat my nek styf word as ek net daaraan dink. Het julle al gesien hoe hulle hang? Die kettings klink aan hulle, die voëls draai om hulle rond, en die matrose wat daar langs kom, wys met die vinger na hulle. Wie is daardie? vra een. Die! O, dit is John Silver. Ek het hom goed geken, sê iemand anders. En n mens kan die kettings hoor raas, as jy verbyggan. Nou ja, dit is waar ons nou amper is, en alles te danke aan daardie vent, en Hands, en Anderson, en ander bedui-welde gekke onder julle. En wat nommer vier betref, daardie seun, kan julle nie sien dat ons hom vir gyselaar moet hou nie? Hy kan dalk nog ons laaste hoop wees. Hom doodmaak? Nie ek nie, maats! En nommer drie? Julle reken dit seker nie dat n egte, gestudeerde dokter dag vir dag na julle kom kyk nie, ne? Jy John, met jou stukkende kop, of jy, George Merry, wat netnou nog gebewe het van die koors, met oë wat so geel is soos lemoenskil op die oomblik. En julle weet seker ook nie dat daar n konvooi aankom nie, nê? Nou ja, ons sal sien

wie nie dan sal bly wees om n gyselaar te hê nie. Wat nommer twee betref, en hoekom ek n ooreenkoms gemaak het, wel, julle het my op julle knieë gesoebat om dit te doen. En ons sou almal gesterf het van die honger as ek dit nie gedoen het nie. Maar dit sou nog niks gewees het nie. Kyk hier dit is my rede!

En hy gooi n papier op die vloer neer wat ek dadelik herken niks anders nie as die kaart op geel papier, met die drie rooi kruisies, wat ek in die stuk seildoek gekry het, onder in die ou kaptein se kis! Hoekom die dokter dit vir hom gegee het, was meer as wat ek kon uitmaak.

Die seerowers kon hulle oë nie glo nie. Hulle bevlieg dit soos n kat wat n muis bespring. Die een ruk dit uit die ander se hand uit; en as n mens hoor hoe hulle lag en skree en vloek van blydschap oor die kaart, sou jy sê hulle het al die geld in hulle besit.

Ja, sê een, dit is Flint se handtekening, reg genoeg. J. F., et n streep en n maswerkknoop daaronder. So het hy dit altyd geteken.

Baie mooi, sê George. Maar hoe sal ons dit vervoer, as ons nie eers n skip het nie?

Skielik spring Silver op, leun met een hand teen die muur, en skree:

Ek waarsku jou, George. Sê nog een woord, en ek gee op jou bas. Hoe? Moet ek dit weet? Hoekom vertel jy ons dit nie, jy en die ander, wat my skoener na die duiwel gestuur het met julle bemoei-sug... Maar nee, jy kan nie; jy het nie soveel verstand as n kakkerlak nie. Maar beleef kan jy, en sal jy praat, George Merry, daar kan jy op reken.

Dit is reg genoeg, sê die ou man, Morgan.

Ek sou so dink, sê Silver. Julle het die skip verloor; ek het die skat gekry. Wie van ons is nou beter? En nou bedank ek, by my siel! Kies nou maar wie julle wil he vir kaptein, ek is klaar met julle.

Silver! skree hulle. Barbecue vir ewig! Barbecue bly kaptein!

So, is dit julle deuntjie? vra die kok. George, ek glo jy sal moet wag tot n ander keer, my vriend. Gelukkig is ek nie haatdraend nie. Maar dit was ek nog nooit gewees nie. En nou, maats, wat van die Swart Kol? Dit beteken nou nie eintlik veel nie, nê? Dick het verniet sy Bybel bederf, en die ongeluk op sy hals gelaai.

„n Mens kan darem tog nog daarop sweer, nie waar nie? brom Dick, wat baie onrustig lyk oor die vloek wat hy op sy kop gehaal het.

„n Bybel met n stukkie uit! spot Silver. Moenie glo nie. Dit help net so min as n boek met versies. Hier, Jim, hier is vir jou n present, sê Silver; en hy gooi die papier na my toe.

Dit was rond, en omtrent so groot as n halfkroon. Op een kant was niks, want dit was die laaste blad; op die ander was n paar verse uit Openbaring, onder andere hierdie woorde, wat my dadelik tref: Maar buite is die honde en die moordenaars. Die gedrukte kant was swart gemaak met houtskool, wat toe reeds begin af gee aan my vingers. Op die ander kant was met houtskool net die woord Afgesit geskryf. Daardie ding lê op die oomblik hier langs my waar ek skryf; maar daar is nou nie een woord meer leesbaar nie, net so n fyn skrapie, soos n mens met jou vingernael maak op papier.

Daar het die aand niks meer gebeur nie. Kort daarna het elkeen n sopie gekry, en ons het gaan almal lê om te slaap. Silver het op George Merry wraak geneem, deur hom op wag te sit, en hom met die dood te dreig as hy sy pos verlaat.

Dit was lank voor ek n oog kon toemaak, en die hemel weet ek had genoeg om oor te dink: die man wat ek dieselfde middag doodgemaak het, my eie gevaarlike toestand, en, bowe alles, die wonderlike speletjie wat ek sien Silver speel. Met die een hand hou hy die muiters in toom, en met die ander gryp hy na elke moontlike middel om sy eie ellendige lewe te red. Hy self het rustig geslaap, en hardop gesnork; tog was my hart seer oor hom, al was hy so sleg, as ek dink aan die gevaar wat hom omring, en die skandelijke gal wat vir hom staan en wag.

# Chapter 30

## On Parole

I WAS wakened—indeed, we were all wakened, for I could see even the sentinel shake himself together from where he had fallen against the door-post—by a clear, hearty voice hailing us from the margin of the wood: “Block house, ahoy!” it cried.

“Here’s the doctor.”

And the doctor it was. Although I was glad to hear the sound, yet my gladness was not without admixture. I remembered with confusion my insubordinate and stealthy conduct, and when I saw where it had brought me—among what companions and

surrounded by what dangers—I felt ashamed to look him in the face.

He must have risen in the dark, for the day had hardly come; and when I ran to a loophole and looked out, I saw him standing, like Silver once before, up to the mid-leg in creeping vapour.

“You, doctor! Top o’ the morning to you, sir!” cried Silver, broad awake and beaming with good nature in a moment. “Bright and early, to be sure; and it’s the early bird, as the saying goes, that gets the rations. George, shake up your timbers, son, and help Dr. Livesey over the ship’s side. All a-doin’ well, your patients was—all well and merry.”

So he pattered on, standing on the hilltop with his crutch under his elbow and one hand upon the side of the log-house—quite the old John in voice, manner, and expression. “We’ve quite a surprise for you too, sir,” he continued. “We’ve a little stranger here—he! he! A noo boarder and lodger, sir, and looking fit and taut as a fiddle; slep’ like a supercargo, he did, right alongside of John—stem to stem we was, all night.”

Dr. Livesey was by this time across the stockade and pretty near the cook, and I could hear the alteration in his voice as he said, “Not Jim?” “The very same Jim as ever was,” says Silver.

The doctor stopped outright, although he did not speak, and it was some seconds before he seemed able to move on.

“Well, well,” he said at last, “duty first and pleasure afterwards, as you might have said yourself, Silver. Let us overhaul these patients of yours.” A moment afterwards he had entered the block house and with one grim nod to me proceeded with his work among the sick. He

seemed under no apprehension, though he must have known that his life, among these

treacherous demons, depended on a hair; and he rattled on to his patients as if he were paying an ordinary professional visit in a quiet English family. His manner, I suppose, reacted on the men, for they behaved to him as if nothing had occurred, as if he were still ship's doctor and they still faithful hands before the mast. "You're doing well, my friend," he said to the fellow with the bandaged head, "and if ever any person had a close shave, it was you; your head must be as hard as iron. Well, George, how goes it? You're a pretty colour, certainly; why, your liver, man, is upside down. Did you take that medicine? Did he take that medicine, men?"

"Aye, aye, sir, he took it, sure enough," returned Morgan. "Because, you see, since I am mutineers' doctor, or prison doctor as I prefer to call it," says Doctor Livesey in his pleasantest way, "I make it a point of honour not to lose a man for King George (God bless him!) and the gallows."

The rogues looked at each other but swallowed the home-thrust in silence.

"Dick don't feel well, sir," said one. "Don't he?" replied the doctor.

"Well, step up here, Dick, and let me

see your tongue. No, I should be surprised if he did! The man's tongue is fit to frighten the French. Another fever."

"Ah, there," said Morgan, "that comed of sp'iling Bibles."

"That comes—as you call it—of being arrant asses," retorted the doctor, "and not having sense enough to know honest air from poison, and the dry land from a vile, pestiferous slough. I think it most probable— though of course it's only an opinion—

-that you'll all have the deuce to pay before you get that malaria out of your systems. Camp in a bog, would you? Silver, I'm surprised at you.

You're less of a fool than many, take you all round; but you don't appear

to me to have the rudiments of a notion of the rules of health.

"Well," he added after he had dosed them round and they had taken his prescriptions, with really laughable humility, more like charity schoolchildren than blood-guilty mutineers and pirates—"well, that's done for today. And now I should wish to have a talk with that boy, please."

And he nodded his head in my direction carelessly.

George Merry was at the door, spitting and spluttering over some bad-tasted medicine; but at the first word of the doctor's proposal he swung round with a deep flush and cried "No!" and swore.



Silver struck the barrel with his open hand.

"Silence!" he roared and looked about him positively like a lion. "Doctor," he went on in his usual tones, "I was a-thinking of that, knowing as how you had a fancy for the boy. We're all humbly grateful for your kindness, and as you see, puts faith in you and takes the drugs

down like that much grog. And I take it I've found a way as'll suit all Hawkins, will you give me your

word of honour as a young gentleman—for a young gentleman you are, although poor born—your word of honour not to slip your cable?"

I readily gave the pledge required. "Then, doctor," said Silver, "you just step outside o' that stockade, and

once you're there I'll bring the boy down on the inside, and I reckon you can yarn through the spars. Good day to you, sir, and all our dooties to the squire and Cap'n Smollett."

The explosion of disapproval, which nothing but Silver's black looks had restrained, broke out immediately

the doctor had left the house. Silver

was roundly accused of playing double—of trying to make a separate peace for himself, of sacrificing the interests of his accomplices and victims, and, in one word, of the identical, exact thing that he was doing. It seemed to me so obvious, in this case, that I could not imagine how he was to turn their anger. But he was twice the man the rest were,

and his last night's victory had given him a huge preponderance on their minds. He called them all the fools and dolts you can imagine, said it was necessary I should talk to the doctor, fluttered the chart in their faces, asked them if they could

afford to break the treaty the very day they were bound a-treasure-hunting.

"No, by thunder!" he cried. "It's us must break the treaty when the time comes; and till then I'll gammon that doctor, if I have to ile his boots with brandy."

And then he bade them get the fire lit, and stalked out upon his crutch, with his hand on my shoulder, leaving them in a disarray, and silenced by his volubility rather than convinced.

"Slow, lad, slow," he said. "They might round upon us in a twinkling of an eye if we was seen to hurry."

Very deliberately, then, did we advance across the sand to where the doctor awaited us on the other side

of the stockade, and as soon as we were within easy speaking distance Silver stopped.

"You'll make a note of this here also, doctor," says he, "and the boy'll

tell you how I saved his life, and were deposed for it too, and you may lay

to that. Doctor, when a man's steering as near the wind as me—playing chuck-farthing with the last breath in his body, like—you wouldn't think it too much, mayhap, to give him one good word? You'll please bear in mind it's not my life

only now—it's that boy's into the bargain; and you'll speak me fair, doctor, and give me a bit o' hope to go on, for the sake of mercy."

Silver was a changed man once he was out there and had his back to his friends and the block house; his cheeks seemed to have fallen in, his voice trembled; never was a soul more dead in earnest.

"Why, John, you're not afraid?" asked Dr. Livesey.

"Doctor, I'm no coward; no, not I—not SO much!" and he snapped his fingers. "If I was I wouldn't say it. But I'll own up fairly, I've the shakes upon me for the gallows. You're a

good man and a true; I never seen a better man! And you'll not forget what I done good, not any more than you'll forget the bad, I know. And I step aside—see here—and leave you and Jim alone. And you'll put that down for me too, for it's a long stretch, is that!"

So saying, he stepped back a little way, till he was out of earshot, and there sat down upon a tree-stump

and began to whistle, spinning round now and again upon his seat so as to command a sight, sometimes of me and the doctor and sometimes of his unruly ruffians as they went to and fro in the sand between the fire—

which they were busy rekindling— and the house, from which they brought forth pork and bread to make the breakfast.

"So, Jim," said the doctor sadly, "here you are. As you have brewed, so shall you drink, my boy. Heaven knows, I cannot find it in my heart to blame you, but this much I will say, be it kind or unkind: when Captain Smollett was well, you dared not have gone off; and when he was ill and couldn't help it, by George, it was downright cowardly!"

I will own that I here began to weep. "Doctor," I said, "you might spare me. I have blamed myself enough;

my life's forfeit anyway, and I should have been dead by now if Silver hadn't stood for me; and doctor, believe this, I can die—and I dare say I deserve it—but what I fear is torture. If they come to torture me —" "Jim," the doctor interrupted, and his voice was quite changed, "Jim, I

can't have this. Whip over, and we'll run for it."

"Doctor," said I, "I passed my word."

"I know, I know," he cried. "We can't help that, Jim, now. I'll take it on my shoulders, holus bolus, blame and shame, my boy; but stay here, I cannot let you. Jump! One jump, and

you're out, and we'll run for it like antelopes."

"No," I replied; "you know right well you wouldn't do the thing yourself—neither you nor squire nor captain; and no more will I. Silver trusted me; I passed my word, and back I go. But, doctor, you did not let me finish. If they come to torture me, I might let slip a word of where the ship is, for I got the ship, part by luck and part by risking, and she lies in North Inlet, on the southern beach, and just below high water. At half tide she must be high and dry."

"The ship!" exclaimed the doctor. Rapidly I described to him my adventures, and he heard me out in silence.

"There is a kind of fate in this," he observed when I had done. "Every step, it's you that saves our lives; and do you suppose by any chance that we are going to let you lose yours? That would be a poor return, my boy. You found out the plot; you found Ben Gunn—the best deed that ever you did, or will do, though you live to ninety. Oh, by Jupiter, and

talking of Ben Gunn! Why, this is the mischief in person. Silver!" he cried. "Silver! I'll give you a piece of advice," he continued as the cook drew near again; "don't you be in any great hurry after that treasure." "Why, sir, I do my possible, which that ain't," said Silver. "I can only, asking your pardon, save my life and the boy's by seeking for that treasure; and you may lay to that." "Well, Silver," replied the doctor, "if that is so, I'll go one step further: look out for squalls when you find it."

"Sir," said Silver, "as between man and man, that's too much and too little. What you're after, why you left the block house, why you given me that there chart, I don't know, now, do I? And yet I done your bidding with my eyes shut and never a word

of hope! But no, this here's too much. If you won't tell me what you mean plain out, just say so and I'll leave the helm."

"No," said the doctor musingly; "I've no right to say more; it's not my secret, you see, Silver, or, I give you my word, I'd tell it you. But I'll go as far with you as I dare go, and a step beyond, for I'll have my wig sorted by the captain or I'm mistaken! And first, I'll give you a bit of hope; Silver, if we both get alive out of this wolf-trap, I'll do my best to save you, short of perjury."

Silver's face was radiant. "You couldn't say more, I'm sure, sir, not if you was my mother," he cried. "Well, that's my first concession," added the doctor. "My second is a piece of advice: keep the boy close beside you, and when you need help, halloo. I'm off to seek it for you, and that itself will show you if I speak at random. Good-bye, Jim."

And Dr. Livesey shook hands with me through the stockade, nodded to Silver, and set off at a brisk pace into the wood.

# Chapter 30

## My woord van eer

Ek word wakker ons almal word wakker gemaak,  
want ek kon die skildwag sien orent spring waar hy teen die deur aan  
geleun het op die geluid van n helder, hartlike stem wat na ons roep  
van die bos se kant af:

Blokhuis, ho! Hier is die dokter.

En dit was ook waarlik die dokter. Maar, al was ek ook nog so bly  
om sy stem te hoor, tog was my vreugde nie ongemeng nie. Ek dink  
met skaamte aan my onge-hoorsaamheid; en toe ek besef waar dit my  
gebring het,

tussen waiter maats en omgewing, kon ek hom nie in die gesig kyk  
nie.

Hy het seker voordag opgestaan, want dit was nog nie eers lig nie;  
en toe ek na n skietgat toe hardloop, sien ek hom staan, soos Silver  
eendag gestaan het, knie-diep in die mis.

U, dokter? Goeiemore, meneer! roep Silver, dadelik helder wakker  
en opgeruimd. Vroeg en vrolik, dis reg. George, man, pluk jou lyf reg  
en help die dokter op dek. U pasd'ente dokter, vorder baie goed.

So hou hy aan met babbel, waar hy staan op die rantjie, met sy kruk  
onder sy arm, en een hand teen die blokhuis se muur, weer heeltemal  
die ou John Silver in stem, maniere, en uitdrukking.

Ons het n groot verrassing vir u, dokter, sê hy. Ons het n klein  
vreemdeling hier, ha! ha! n nuwe gas, en so gesond as n vis. Hy het  
geslaap soos n roos, langs ou John, rug aan rug, die hele nag deur.

Dokter Livesey was teen die tyd al oor die omheining, en staan naby  
Silver. Ek kon die verandering in sy stem hoor toe hy vra:

Tog nie Jim nie?

Jim, en niemand anders nie, sê Silver.

Die dokter staan botstil, al praat hy nie n woord nie, en dit het n  
rukkie geduur voor hy weer aanloop.

Wel, wel, sê hy eindelijk, eers plig en dan plesier, soos jy self altyd  
sê, Silver. Laat my eers daardie pasd'ente van jou sien.

,n Oomblik later gaan hy die blokhuis in, en, met n knik vir my,  
begin hy sy werk aan die siekes. Hy lyk heeltemal op sy gemak, en tog  
wis hy dat sy lewe aan n draad hang, tussen hierdie skurke; en hy  
babbel met sy pasd'ente asof hy n gewone besoek bring aan n  
ordentlike familie. Ek dink sy houding het indruk gemaak op die  
mans; want hulle behandel hom asof daar niks gebeur het nie, asof hy  
nog skeepsdokter was, en hulle nog getroue matrose.

Jy is baie beter, my vriend, sê hy vir die man met die verband om sy kop, en as iemand ooit na aan sy einde was, dan was dit jy. Jou kop moet so hard soos yster wees. Wel, George, hoe gaan dit? Jy het n pragtige kleur man; jou lewer sit onderstebo. Het jy daardie medisyne gedrink? Het hy dit gedrink, kerels?

Ja, dokter, antwoord Morgan.

Ek vra maar, sê Dokter Livesey so ewe vriendelik, want nou dat ek muiters dokter, of Hewers tronk-dokter is, is ek daarop gesteld om nie een man verlore te laat gaan vir Koning George en die galg nie.

Die skurke kyk mekaar aan, maar sluk hierdie skimp in stilte.

Dick voel nie wel nie, dokter, sê een.

Is dit so? vra die dokter. Kom hier, Dick, en laat my jou tong sien. Nee, ek is nie verwonder nie. Jou tong is genoeg om n mens bang te maak. Ook weer koors.

Sien julle? sê Morgan. Dit kom van bybels stukkend sny.

Dit kom daarvan as mense esels is, sê die dokter, en nie genoeg verstand het om te onderskei tussen vars lug en gifdampe nie, tussen droë land en n vuil, verpeste sloot nie. Ek dink julle sal lank moet sukkel om die malaria weer uit julle lywe uit te kry. Julle wou mos in n moeras kampeer. Silver, ek is verwonder oor jou. Jy het tog meer verstand as die ander, maar dit lyk vir my of jy hoegenaamd niks weet van die gesondheidswette nie.

So, nou is dit klaar vir vandag, sê hy, nadat hy hulle almal deurgeloopt het, en hulle sy medisyne gesluk het, meer soos skoolkinders as muiters en seerowers. En nou wil ek graag met daardie seun praat.

George Merry staan by die deur, en doen sy bes om die een of ander slegte soort medisyne af te sluk; maar toe die dokter hierdie voorstel maak, vlieg hy om, en met n rooi gesig skree hy Nee! en vloek.

Silver slaan met sy plat hand op die vat.

Stilte! brul hy soos n leeu, en kyk rond. Dokter, sê hy, op sy gewone manier, ek het juis daaraan ge-dink, want ek weet hoeveel u van die seun dink. Ons is almal baie dankbaar vir u vriendelikheid, en soos u sien, ons vertrou u, en gooi u drankies na binne asof dit grog is. Ek glo ek het n plan uitgedink wat almal sal bevre-dig. Hawkins, gee my jou woord van eer, dat jy nie sal weggooi nie?

Ek gee hom dadelik die versekering.

Nou ja, dokter, sê Silver, gaan u weer terug oor die heining, en dan sal ek die seun aan die binnekant na u toe bring, en dan gesels julle deur die spleet. Goeien-dag, meneer, en gee ons groete aan die squire en Kaptein Smollett.

Die storm van afkeuring, wat Silver tot nog toe deur sy kwaai houding teëgehou het, bars los nou dat die dokter die blokhuis verlaat het. Openlik word Silver beskuldig dat hy met die vyand kop in een

mus is, dat hy sy eie lyf wil red, en sy maats daarvoor wil opoffer, kortliks, van die ding wat hy werklik doen! Vir my was die saak so duidelik, dat ek nie wis hoe hy hulle woede sou keer nie. Maar hy was tweemaal die man wat al die ander tesame uitmaak; en sy oorwinning van die vorige aand het groot eerbied vir hom ingeboesem. Hy het hulle uitgeskel vir esels, gesê dit is noodsaaklik dat ek met die dokter praat, die kaart onder hulle neus gedruk, en hulle gevra of hulle dit wou waag om die ooreenkomste verbreek op dieselfde dag wat na die jag na na die skat sou begin.

Nee, so waar nie! skree hy, dis ons wat die verdrag moet breek, maar as die regte tyd daarvoor gekom het; en tot dan toe sal ek alles doen wat die dokter verlang, al moet ek ook sy stewels met brandewyn skoon-maak.

En toe beveel hy hulle om die vuur op te maak, en stap weg op sy kruk, met sy hand op my skouer, terwyl hulle bly staan, meer oorbluf deur sy woordevloed as wat hulle werklik oortuig was.

Stadig, Jim, stadig, sê hy. Hulle sal ons soos die blits op die lyf val, as hulle sien ons is haastig.

Baie langsaam gaan ons toe deur die sand tot waar die dokter vir ons wag aan die ander kant van die omheining. Sodra ons naby genoeg was om te praat, bly Silver staan.

Ek hoop dat u dit nie sal vergeet nie, dokter, sê hy. Jim sal u vertel hoe dat ek sy lewe gered het, en my ontslag daarvoor gekry het, ook. Dokter, as n man so na aan die wind seil as ek, en alle waag wat hy besit, dan sal u tog nie onwillig wees om vir hom een goeie woordjie te doen nie, nê? Onthou bietjie, dis nie net my eie lewe wat in gevaar is nie, maar dis die seun sn ook. Praat reguit, dokter, en gee my n bietjie hoop, om Gods wil.

Silver was n ander man, as hy nie in die geselskap van sy maats was nie. Dit lyk of sy wange ingeval het, sy stem bewe, hy was dooernstig.

Wat, John, is jy tog nie bang nie? vra Dr. Livesey.

Dokter, ek is nie n lafaard nie, nee, nie soveel nie! en hy klap met sy vingers. As ek was, sou ek dit nie sê nie. Maar ek sê reguit, ek kry die bewerasie as ek aan die galg dink. U is n goeie mens, dokter; ek het nog nooit n beter man gesien nie! En u sal nie die goeie vergeet wat ek gedoen het nie, net so mi as wat u die kwaad sal vergeet. Dit weet ek. En nou stap ek opsy, en laat u en Jim alleen. En ek hoop dat u dit ook sal onthou, want dit is n groot guns.

Met hierdie woorde stap hy so n entjie weg, totdat hy te ver was om te hoor wat ons praat, en gaan daar op n boomstam sit en fluit. Nou en dan draai hy op sy sitplek rond, om dan na my en die dokter te kyk, dan na sy losbandige maats soos hulle daar heen en weer loop tussen die vuur en die blokhuis, waar hulle varkveis en brood

vandaan bring vir ontbyt.

So, Jim, sê die dokter bedroef, hier sit jy nou. Soos jy gesaai het, so moet jy maai, my seun. Die hemel weet, ek wil jou nie veroordeel nie; maar ek wil darem net een ding sê, of dit nou jou seermaak, of nie: toe Kaptein Smollett nog gesond was, het jy dit nie gewaag om weg te gaan nie. En toe hy siek was, en dit nie kon verhinder nie, was dit niks anders as lafhartig van jou om dit te doen nie.

Ek beken dat ek by hierdie woorde aan huil gegaan het.

Dokter, sê ek, spaar my tog maar. Ek sal tog moet sterf, en was dit nie vir Silver nie, dan was dit nou al met my gedaan. En dokter, glo my, ek kan sterf en ek verdien dit seker ook maar waar ek so bang voor is, is dat hulle my sal martel. As hulle daarmee begin... Jim, val die dokter my in die rede, en sy stem was hees, Jim, ek kan dit nie staan nie. Klim oor, en laat ons hardloop.

Dokter, sê ek, ek het my woord gegee.

Ek weet, ek weet, fluister hy, maar ons kan dit nou nie help nie. Ek sal alles op my skouers neem, die blaam en die skande, my kind; maar ek laat jou nie hier bly nie. Spring! Een spring, en jy s uit, en ons sal hardloop soos hase.

Nee, antwoord ek, u sal self nie so iets doen nie, dokter; die squire ook nie, en die kaptein ook nie; en ek ook nie. Silver het my vertrou, ek het my woord gegee, en ek gaan terug. Maar, dokter, laat my klaar praat. As hulle my martel, kan ek dalk n woordjie laat glip waar die skip lê. Want ek het die skip gekry, net met n gelukslag, en met n bietjie waag. Dit le in North Inlet, aan die Suidekant, en, as die water effens sak, sal dit hoog en droog wees.

Die skip! sê die dokter verbaas.

Ek vertel hom toe in n paar woorde van my avonture, en hy luister sonder n woord.

Dit lyk of dit maar so moet wees, merk hy op, toe ek klaar was. By elke stap is dit jy wat ons lewe red; en dink jy nou altemit dat ons jou in die steek sal laat? Dit sou baie ondankbaar wees, my seun. Jy het die kom-plot uitgevind; jy het Ben Gunn gekry: die beste daad wat jy al ooit gedoen het, of sal doen, al word jy ook neëntig. En, van Ben Gunn gepraat, hy is die ou Josie self. Silver! Ek kan jou n goeie raad gee, en toe die kok naderkom, moenie al te haastig wees om daardie skat te gaan soek nie.

Ek ssl my uiterste bes moet doen om die skat te kry, sê Silver. Dis die enigste manier, dokter, om my eie lewe, en Jim sn te red.

As dit so is, sal ek jou nog een raad gee: pas op vir onweer as jy dit kry.

Dokter, sê Silver, as ons soos man tot man wil praat, dan is dit te min en te veel. Ek weet nie waarom u die blokhuis verlaat het nie,



waarom u my die kaart gegee het nie, en ek het maar net gedoen wat u van my verlang het, sonder iets uit te vra. Maar dit is darem n bietjie te veel. Vertel my wat u bedoel, of ek verlaat die roer.

Nee, sê die dokter, ek mag niks meer sê nie. Sien jy, dis nie my geheim nie, Silver, of, op my woord, ek sou dit jou vertel. Maar ek sal net so ver gaan as ek durf, en miskien nog n stappie verder; want die kaptein sal my lelik oor die kole haal, as hy dit hoor. In die eerste plek, ek sal jou n straaltjie hoop gee: Silver, as ons twee ooit lewendig uit hierdie muisval uitkom, sal ek doen al wat ek kan om jou te red, sonder om te lieg. Silver se gesig straal van blydschap. U kon nie meer gesê het nie, Meneer, al was u my eie moeder, sê hy.

Wel, dan wil ek jou nog een raad gee: Hou Jim altyd dig by jou, en skreeu as jy hulp nodig het. Ek gaan die hulp nou dadelik soek, en dit sal vir jou n bewys wees dat ek dit op reg met jou meen. Dag, Jim.

Dr. Livesey druk my hand deur een van die splete in die heining, knik vir Silver, en stap vinnig weg na die bos se kant toe.

# Chapter 31

## The Treasure-hunt—Flint's Pointer

"JIM," said Silver when we were alone, "if I saved your life, you saved mine; and I'll not forget it. I seen the doctor waving you to run for it—with the tail of my eye, I did; and I seen you say no, as plain as hearing. Jim, that's one to you. This is the first glint of hope I had since the attack failed, and I owe it you.

And now, Jim, we're to go in for this here treasure-hunting, with sealed orders too, and I don't like it; and you and me must stick close, back to back like, and we'll save our necks in spite o' fate and fortune."

Just then a man hailed us from the fire that breakfast was ready, and we were soon seated here and there about the sand over biscuit and fried

junk. They had lit a fire fit to roast an ox, and it was now grown so hot that they could only approach it from the windward, and even there not without precaution. In the same wasteful spirit, they had cooked, I suppose, three times more than we could eat; and one of them, with an empty laugh, threw what was left

into the fire, which blazed and roared again over this unusual fuel. I never in my life saw men so careless of the morrow; hand to mouth is the only word that can describe their

way of doing; and what with wasted food and sleeping sentries, though they were bold enough for a brush

and be done with it, I could see their entire unfitness for anything like a prolonged campaign.

Even Silver, eating away, with Captain Flint upon his shoulder, had not a word of blame for their recklessness. And this the more surprised me, for I thought he had never shown himself so cunning as he did then.

"Aye, mates," said he, "it's lucky you have Barbecue to think for you with this here head. I got what I wanted, I did. Sure enough, they have the ship. Where they have it, I don't know yet; but once we hit the treasure, we'll have to jump about and find out. And

then, mates, us that has the boats, I reckon, has the upper hand."

Thus he kept running on, with his mouth full of the hot bacon; thus he restored their hope and confidence, and, I more than suspect, repaired his own at the same time.

“As for hostage,” he continued, “that’s his last talk, I guess, with them he loves so dear. I’ve got my piece o’ news, and thanky to him for that; but it’s over and done. I’ll take him in a line when we go treasure-hunting, for we’ll keep him like so much gold, in case of accidents, you mark, and in the meantime. Once we got the ship and treasure both and off

to sea like jolly companions, why then we’ll talk Mr. Hawkins over, we will, and we’ll give him his share, to be sure, for all his kindness.”

It was no wonder the men were in a good humour now. For my part, I was horribly cast down. Should the scheme he had now sketched prove feasible, Silver, already doubly a traitor, would not hesitate to adopt it. He had still a foot in either camp, and there was no doubt he would prefer wealth and freedom with the pirates to a bare escape from hanging, which was the best he had to hope on our side.

Nay, and even if things so fell out that he was forced to keep his faith with Dr. Livesey, even then what danger lay before us! What a moment that would be when the suspicions of his followers turned to certainty and he and I should have to fight for dear life—he a cripple and I a boy—against five strong and active seamen!

Add to this double apprehension the mystery that still hung over the behaviour of my friends, their unexplained desertion of the stockade, their inexplicable cession of the chart, or harder still to understand, the doctor’s last warning

to Silver, “Look out for squalls when you find it,” and you will readily believe how little taste I found in my breakfast and with how uneasy a heart I set forth behind my captors on the quest for treasure.

We made a curious figure, had anyone been there to see us—all in soiled sailor clothes and all but me armed to the teeth. Silver had two guns slung about him—one before and one behind—besides the great cutlass at his waist and a pistol in each pocket of his square-tailed coat. To complete his strange appearance, Captain Flint sat perched upon his shoulder and

gabbling odds and ends of purposeless sea-talk. I had a line about my waist and followed obediently after the sea-cook, who held the loose end of the rope, now in his free hand, now between his powerful teeth. For all the world, I was led like a dancing bear.

The other men were variously burthened, some carrying picks and shovels—for that had been the very first necessary they brought ashore from the HISPANIOLA—others laden with pork, bread, and brandy for the midday meal. All the stores, I

observed, came from our stock, and I

could see the truth of Silver’s words

the night before. Had he not struck a bargain with the doctor, he and

his mutineers, deserted by the ship, must have been driven to subsist on clear water and the proceeds of their hunting. Water would have been

little to their taste; a sailor is not usually a good shot; and besides all that, when they were so short of eatables, it was not likely they would be very flush of powder.

Well, thus equipped, we all set out— even the fellow with the broken head, who should certainly have kept in shadow—and straggled, one after another, to the beach, where the two gigs awaited us. Even these bore

trace of the drunken folly of the pirates, one in a broken thwart, and both in their muddy and unbailed condition. Both were to be carried along with us for the sake of safety; and so, with our numbers divided between them, we set forth upon the bosom of the anchorage.

As we pulled over, there was some discussion on the chart. The red cross was, of course, far too large to be a guide; and the terms of the note on the back, as you will hear, admitted of some ambiguity. They ran, the reader may remember, thus: Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to the N. of N.N.E.

Skeleton Island E.S.E. and by E. Ten feet.

A tall tree was thus the principal mark. Now, right before us the anchorage was bounded by a plateau from two to three hundred feet high, adjoining on the north the sloping southern shoulder of the Spy-glass and rising again towards the south into the rough, cliffy eminence called the Mizzenmast Hill. The top of the plateau was dotted thickly with pine-trees of varying height. Every here and there, one of a different species rose forty or fifty feet clear above its neighbours, and which of these was the particular “tall tree” of Captain

Flint could only be decided on the spot, and by the readings of the compass.

Yet, although that was the case, every man on board the boats had picked a favourite of his own ere we were half-way over, Long John alone shrugging his shoulders and bidding them wait till they were there.

We pulled easily, by Silver’s directions, not to weary the hands prematurely, and after quite a long passage, landed at the mouth of the second river—that which runs down a woody cleft of the Spy-glass. Thence, bending to our left, we began to ascend the slope towards the plateau.

At the first outset, heavy, miry ground and a matted, marish vegetation greatly delayed our progress; but by little and little the hill began to steepen and become stony under foot, and the wood to change its character and to grow in a more open order. It was, indeed,

a most pleasant portion of the island that we were now approaching. A heavy-scented broom and many flowering shrubs had almost taken the place of grass. Thickets of green nutmeg-trees were dotted here and there with the red columns and the broad shadow of the pines; and the first mingled their spice with the aroma of the others. The air, besides, was fresh and stirring, and this, under the sheer sunbeams, was a wonderful refreshment to our senses. The party spread itself abroad, in a fan shape, shouting and leaping to and fro. About the centre, and a good way behind the rest, Silver and I followed—I tethered by my rope, he ploughing, with deep pants, among the sliding gravel. From time to time, indeed, I had to lend him a hand, or he must have missed his footing and fallen backward down the hill.

We had thus proceeded for about half a mile and were approaching the brow of the plateau when the man upon the farthest left began to cry aloud, as if in terror. Shout after

shout came from him, and the others began to run in his direction.

“He can’t ‘a found the treasure,” said old Morgan, hurrying past us from the right, “for that’s clean a-top.” Indeed, as we found when we also reached the spot, it was something very different. At the foot of a pretty big pine and involved in a green creeper, which had even partly lifted some of the smaller bones, a human skeleton lay, with a few shreds of clothing, on the ground. I believe a chill struck for a moment to every heart.

“He was a seaman,” said George Merry, who, bolder than the rest, had gone up close and was examining the rags of clothing. “Leastways, this is good sea-cloth.”

“Aye, aye,” said Silver; “like enough; you wouldn’t look to find a bishop here, I reckon. But what sort of a way is that for bones to lie? ‘Tain’t in natur’.”

Indeed, on a second glance, it seemed impossible to fancy that the body was in a natural position. But for some disarray (the work, perhaps, of the birds that had fed upon him or of the slow-growing creeper that had gradually enveloped his remains) the man lay perfectly straight—his feet pointing in one direction, his hands, raised above

his head like a diver’s, pointing directly in the opposite.

“I’ve taken a notion into my old numbskull,” observed Silver. “Here’s the compass; there’s the tip-top p’int o’ Skeleton Island, stickin’ out like a tooth. Just take a bearing, will you, along the line of them bones.”

It was done. The body pointed straight in the direction of the island,

and the compass read duly E.S.E. and by E.

"I thought so," cried the cook; "this here is a p'inter. Right up there is our line for the Pole Star and the jolly dollars. But, by thunder! If it don't make me cold inside to think of

Flint. This is one of HIS jokes, and no mistake. Him and these six was alone here; he killed 'em, every man; and this one he hauled here and laid down by compass, shiver my timbers! They're long bones, and the hair's been yellow. Aye, that would be Allardyce. You mind Allardyce, Tom Morgan?"

"Aye, aye," returned Morgan; "I mind him; he owed me money, he did, and took my knife ashore with him."

"Speaking of knives," said another, "why don't we find his'n lying round? Flint warn't the man to pick a seaman's pocket; and the birds, I guess, would leave it be."

"By the powers, and that's true!" cried Silver.

"There ain't a thing left here," said Merry, still feeling round among the bones; "not a copper doit nor a baccy box. It don't look nat'ral to me."

"No, by gum, it don't," agreed Silver; "not nat'ral, nor not nice, says you."

Great guns! Messmates, but if Flint was living, this would be a hot spot for you and me. Six they were, and six are we; and bones is what they are now."

"I saw him dead with these here deadlights," said Morgan. "Billy took me in. There he laid, with penny-pieces on his eyes."

"Dead—aye, sure enough he's dead and gone below," said the fellow with the bandage; "but if ever sperrit walked, it would be Flint's. Dear heart, but he died bad, did Flint!" "Aye, that he did," observed another; "now he raged, and now he hollered for the rum, and now he sang."

'Fifteen Men' were his only song, mates; and I tell you true, I never rightly liked to hear it since. It was main hot, and the windy was open, and I hear that old song comin' out as clear as clear—and the death-haul on the man already."

"Come, come," said Silver; "stow this talk. He's dead, and he don't walk, that I know; leastways, he won't walk by day, and you may lay to that. Care killed a cat. Fetch ahead for the doubloons."

We started, certainly; but in spite of the hot sun and the staring daylight, the pirates no longer ran separate and shouting through the wood, but

kept side by side and spoke with bated breath. The terror of the dead buccaneer had fallen on their spirits.

# Chapter 31

## Die soekery na die skat: Flint se padwyser

Jim, se Silver, toe ons weer alleen is, ek het jou lewe gered, maar jy het ook myne gered, en ek sal dit nie vergeet nie. Ek het gesien hoe die dokter vir jou gewink het om weg te hardloop, so uit die een hoek van my oog het ek dit gesien. En ek het ook gesien dat jy se nee, net so duidelik asof ek dit gehoor het. Jim, ek sal dit nie vergeet nie. Dit is die eerste ligstraaltjie wat ek gesien het, vandat die aanval misluk het, en dit het ek aan jou te danke. En nou, Jim, ons gaan die skat soek, en ons weet nie waar ons af of aan is nie, en dit staan my glad nie aan nie. Jy en ek moet dig bymekaar staan, rug aan rug, as dit nodig is, en dan sal ons altemit nog ons halse red, al lyk alles nou so verkeerd.

Een van die mans roep nou om te se dat die ontbyt gereed is, en gou-gou sit ons almal op die sand, een hier, en een daar, elkeen met n stuk gebraaide vleis en beskuit. Hulle het n vuur gemaak, groot genoeg om n os daarop te braai; en dit gee nou son hitte af, dat n mens net aan die windkant daar naby kon kom. Met dieselfde oordadigheid het hulle driemaal soveel gekook as wat ons kon eet; en een van hulle gooi met n verspotte laggie die oorskiet in die vuur. Nooit in my lewe het ek mense so min besorg gesien vir die dag van more nie. Hulle het van hand to mond geleef; die kos word vermors, die wagte slaap op hulle pos, sodat dit vir my lyk of hulle totaal ongeskik was om dit vol te hou, al

was hulle miskien astringent genoeg om n onverwagte aanval te maak.

Selfs Silver, wat daar op sy gemak sit en eet, met Kaptein Flint op sy skouer, bestraf hulle nie oor die verkwisting nie.

Ja, maats, se hy, dit is gelukkig dat julle vir Barbecue het om vir julle part te dink met hierdie kop. Ek het alles gekry wat ek wou gehad het. Dis waar, hulle het die skip. Waar dit is, weet ek nog nie; maar sodra as ons die skat in hande het, sal ons moet rondspring en dit soek. En dan moet julle weet, ons is die beste daarvan af want ons het die bote.

So praat hy met n vol mond voort om hulle moed weer op te wek, en ook, soos dit vir my lyk, om sy eie te versterk.

Wat ons gyselaar betref, se hy verder, die het sy laaste praatjie gehou met sy liewe vriende. Deur hom het ek my nuus te wete gekom, maar nou is dit ook klaar. Ek sal hom aan n tou vasbind as ons gaan soek na die skat, want ons moet hom soos goud bewaar, in geval daar iets verkeerd gaan. As ons eers die skat en die skip altwee in ons besit het, gaan ons vrolik die see in, en dan sal ons Mnr. Hawkins ompraat,

en hom ook n aandeel gee, vir al sy vriendelikheid.

Geen wonder dat die mans in n goeie bui geraak het nie. Wat my betref, ek was aaklig temeergedruk. As die plan, wat hy nou hier skets, maar uitvoerbaar lyk, sou Silver, wat alreeds dubbeld n verraaier was, nie wag om dit uit te voer nie. Hy het nou n voet in altwee kampe gehad, en hy sou seker n lewe in rykdom en vryheid verkies bo die smalle kans om die galg te ontwyk, en dit was al waarop hy van ons kant gehoop het.

Selfs as sake so loop, dat hy sy woord aan die Dokter moes hou, watter gevaar lê daar nie nog voor nie! Waiter vreeslike oomblik sou dit nie wees as die vermoedes van sy maats sekerheid word nie, en ons twee

hy n kreupele, en ek n seun om lewe en dood moes veg teen vyf sterk, aktiewe kerele!

Hierby het nog die onverstaanbare gedrag van my vriende gekom; hoekom hulle die blokhuis verlaat het; om watter rede hulle die kaart afgegee het; of, wat nog die swaarste was om te verstaan, die dokter se laaste waarskuwing aan Silver: Pas op vir onweer as jy dit kry. Ek het maar baie min lus gehad om te eet, en my hart was swaar, toe ek agter my bewakers aanstap op hulle tog.

Ons het wonderlik daarna uitgesien, soos ons daar aanstap almal in besmeerde matroosklere, en almal, behalwe ek, tot die tande toe gewapen. Silver het twee gewere omgehang een voor en een agter behalwe die groot dolk in sy gordel, en in iedere sak n pistool. Om die snaakse figuur nog wonderliker te laat lyk, sit Kaptein Flint op sy skouer, en babbel allerhande woorde wat hy van die matrose geleer het. Daar was n tou om my middel vas, en ek stap gedwee agter die skeepskok aan, wat die punt daarvan in sy hand hou, en party keer tussen sy sterk tande. Ek was soos n beer, wat na die komedie toe gelei word, om te gaan dans.

Die ander matrose het almal hulle eie pak gedra, party van hulle pikke en grawe want dit was die eerste goed wat hulle van die Hispaniola af gebring het ander weer dra varkveis, brood, en brandewyn vir hulle middagete. Al die goed kom uit ons voorraad in die blokhuis; en ek sien nou die waarheid van Silver se woorde die aand te vore. As hy nie daardie ooreenkoms met die dokter gemaak het nie, sou hy en sy seerowers op skoon water en wildvleis moes gelewe het. Water sou nie erg na hulle smaak gewees het nie; n matroos is gewoonlik maar onhandig met n roer; en, buitendien, as hulle eetgoed so skaars was, had hulle seker ook maar min kruut.

Op die manier toegerus, begin ons die tog selfs die man met die gewonde kop, wat liewers in die koelte moes gebly het en ons loop een lang ry agtermekaar na die strand toe, waar die twee bote vir ons wag. Selfs hieraan kon n mens tekens van die baldadigheid van die



rowers sien. Die een se sitvlak was stukkend, en albei was vuil en vol modder. Ons sou altwee saamneem, vir versigtigheid, en dus, nadat ons geselskap in twee verdeel was, roei ons na die oorkant van die ankerplaas toe.

Op pad bespreek hulle die kaart. Die rooi kruis was natuurlik te groot om die regte koers aan te wys; en die aanwysings agterop kon ook op meer as een manier uitgeleë word.

Miskien onthou die leser nog die woorde?

Groot boom, Verkyker-nek, een graad N. van N. N. O.

Geraamte-eiland O. S. O. en O.

Tien voet.

n Groot boom was dus die vernaamste teken. Nou, reg voor ons, was die ankerplaas begrens deur n gelykte van twee tot driehonderd voet hoog, wat aan die noorde aansluit aan die skuins kant van die Verkyker, en weer aan die suidekant n klipperige rantjie vorm, wat die naam van Mizzenmast Hill gedra het. Bo-op was die gelykte dig begroei met dennebome. So hier en daar, tussen in, staan een wat goed n veertig of vyftig voet bokant sy maats uitsteek. Watter een was nou die groot boom van Kaptein Flint? Die kompas sou dit moet aanwys.

En tog het elke man aan boord één van die bome uitgekies as die regte, lank voor ons aan die oorkant gekom het. Long John alleen trek sy skouers op, en sê hulle moet wag tot hulle daar kom.

Op Silver se bevel het ons stadig geroei, om die mans nie te vroeg te vermoei nie; en na n baie lang tog land ons by die mond van die tweede rivier die een wat deur n bosagtige kloof van die Verkyker afloop. Hier draai ons links, en begin die skuinste uit te loop.

Eers was die grond modderig en swaar om oor te loop, met plante wat deurmekaar gevleg was; maar stadigaan word die koppie steiler, die grond word klipperig, en die bome groei meer uit mekaar uit. Dit was seker een van die mooiste gedeeltes van die eiland waar ons nou was. Die grond was oorgetrek met struie en blomme wat n lekker geur afgee. Hier en daar staan klompies neutbome groen tussen die hoë denne; en die geure van harpuit en speserye meng heerlik deurmekaar. Die lug was koel en verfrissend.

Die bende spreid nou uit, en hardloop heen en weer, onder geskreeu en geraas. Silver en ek kom n goeie ent agter die ander aan, ek aan die tou vas, en hy ploeg, steun-steun deur die los klippies. Elke slag moes ek hom n handjie gee, of hy sou teruggerol het langs die steilte af.

Op die manier het ons omtrent n halwe myl gegaan, en was nou amper bo, toe iemand links van ons hard begin te skree, asof hy in doodsang is. Hy gee gil op gil, en die ander hardloop almal na hom toe.

Dit kan nie die skat wees wat hy gekry het nie, sê ou Morgan, en hy

hardloop by ons verby, want die lê reg bo-op.

En toe ons daar kom, vind ons ook heeltemal iets anders. Onder n groot denneboom, en half toegegroeï deur n klimop, wat selfs n paar van die kleinste beentjies opgelig het, lê n mens se geraamte, met n paar flenters klere daarby. Ek is seker dat elkeen van ons n koue rilling deur sy lyf gekry het.

Hy was n seeman, se George Merry, wat n bietjie meer moed as die ander gehad het, en nou aan die stukkies lap voel, ten minste, dit was goeie see-doek hierdie.

Ja, natuurlik, sê Silver, of het jy altemit verwag om n biskop hier te kry? Maar hoekom le die bene so snaaks? Dis nie natuurlik nie.

En waarlik, dit was duidelik dat die liggaam nie in n natuurlike houding geleë het nie. Behalwe vir n beentjie hier en daar wat verskuif was, (miskien die werk van die voëls wat op hom geaas het), lê die man suiwer reguit die voete wys na een kant toe, en sy hande, wat bokant sy kop bymekaar kom, soos n duiker sn, wys reguit na die ander kant toe.

Ek het n gedagte hier in my ou harsingkas gekry, sê Silver, Hier is die kompas; daar is die hoogste punt van Geraamte-eiland. Meet bietjie op langs die lyn van hierdie bene.

Toe dit gedoen word, wys die geraamte reguit na die eiland toe, en die kompas teken pi'esies O. S. O. en O.

Ek dog so, sê Silver; dit is n padwyser hierdie. Daar bo, reguit soheentoe, le die lekker dollars. Maar, alle wêreld, ek word koud as ek aan Flint dink! Dit is een van sy grappies. Hy en daardie ses was alleen hier. Hy het almal vermoor, een na die ander. En hierdie een het hy hiernatoe gesleep, en hom volgens die kompas neergeleë. Die bene is lank, en die hare was geel. Dit moet Allardyce gewees het. Onthou jy nog vir Allardyce, Tom Morgan?

Ja, goed, sê Morgan. Hy het my geld geskuld, en het my mes saamgeneem aan wal.

Van messe gepraat, sê een van die ander, hoekom le syne dan nie hier nie? Flint sou dit nie geneem het nie, en die voëls ook nie.

Dit is wragtie waar! sê Silver.

Hier lê niks nie, sê Merry, en hy voel rond langs die geraamte, nie n koperdubbeltjie of n tabakdoos nie. Dit lyk nie vir my pluï nie.

Nee, dis waar, sê Silver. Dit lyk nie mooi nie. Grote Genugtig! kerele, as Flint nog geleef het, sou hierdie plekke vir ons baie warm geword het! Hulle was ses, en ons is ses; en al wat van hulle oorgebly het, is n hoop bene.

Ek het hom met my eie oë dood gesien lê, sê Morgan. Billy het my ingeneem. Daar het hy geleë, met pennies op sy oë.

Dood ja, hy is wel dood, sê die man met die gewonde kop, maar, as

daar ooit n gees gedwaal het, sal Flint sn dit doen. Hy het n aaklige uiteinde gehad. Ja, dis waar, bevestig n ander; dan raas hy, dan vra hy rum, en dan sing hy weer. Vyftien man was sy enigste lied, maats; en ek kan julle sê, ek kon dit nooit verdra na die tyd nie. Dit was baie warm, en die venster het oopgestaan, en ek kon daardie ou liedjie hoor, so duidelik as wat, en die doodsroggel was al in sy keel.

Ag, kom, sê Silver, hou op met daardie praatjies. Hy is dood, en hy dwaal nie; in elk geval, nie helder oordag nie. Wat help dit om bang te wees? Vooruit, na die doebloene toe!

Ons gaan weer voort; maar, al skyn die son so warm, loop die rowers nou nie meer rond deur die bosse nie. Hulle bly bymekaar, en praat saggies. Die vrees vir die oorlede ou seeskuimer het op hulle siel geval.

# Chapter 32

## The Treasure-hunt—The Voice

### Among the Trees

PARTLY from the damping influence of this alarm, partly to rest Silver and the sick folk, the whole party sat down as soon as they had gained the brow of the ascent.

The plateau being somewhat tilted towards the west, this spot on which we had paused commanded a wide prospect on either hand. Before us, over the tree-tops, we beheld the

Cape of the Woods fringed with surf; behind, we not only looked down upon the anchorage and Skeleton Island, but saw—clear across the spit and the eastern lowlands—a great field of open sea upon the east.

Sheer above us rose the Spy-glass, here dotted with single pines, there black with precipices. There was no sound but that of the distant breakers, mounting from all round, and the chirp of countless insects in the

brush. Not a man, not a sail, upon the sea; the very largeness of the view increased the sense of solitude. Silver, as he sat, took certain bearings with his compass.

“There are three ‘tall trees’” said he, “about in the right line from Skeleton Island. ‘Spy-glass shoulder,’ I take it, means that lower p’int there. It’s child’s play to find the stuff now. I’ve half a mind to dine first.”

“I don’t feel sharp,” growled Morgan. “Thinkin’ o’ Flint—I think it were—as done me.”

“Ah, well, my son, you praise your stars he’s dead,” said Silver.

“He were an ugly devil,” cried a third pirate with a shudder; “that blue in the face too!”

“That was how the rum took him,” added Merry. “Blue! Well, I reckon he was blue. That’s a true word.”

Ever since they had found the skeleton and got upon this train of thought, they had spoken lower and lower, and they had almost got to whispering by now, so that the sound of their talk hardly interrupted the silence of the wood. All of a sudden, out of the middle of the trees in front of us, a thin, high, trembling voice struck up the well-known air and words:

“Fifteen men on the dead man’s chest— Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!”

I never have seen men more dreadfully affected than the pirates. The

colour went from their six faces like enchantment; some leaped to their feet, some clawed hold of others; Morgan grovelled on the ground.

"It's Flint, by —!" cried Merry.

The song had stopped as suddenly as it began—broken off, you would have said, in the middle of a note, as though someone had laid his hand upon the singer's mouth. Coming through the clear, sunny atmosphere among the green tree-tops, I thought it had sounded airily and sweetly; and the effect on my companions was the stranger.

"Come," said Silver, struggling with his ashen lips to get the word out; "this won't do. Stand by to go about. This is a rum start, and I can't name the voice, but it's someone skylarking—someone that's flesh and blood, and you may lay to that."

His courage had come back as he spoke, and some of the colour to his face along with it. Already the others had begun to lend an ear to this encouragement and were coming a little to themselves, when the same voice broke out again—not this time singing, but in a faint distant hail that echoed yet fainter among the clefts of the Spy-glass.

"Darby M'Graw," it wailed—for that is the word that best describes the sound—"Darby M'Graw! Darby M'Graw!" again and again and again; and then rising a little higher, and with an oath that I leave out: "Fetch aft the rum, Darby!"

The buccaneers remained rooted to the ground, their eyes starting from their heads. Long after the voice had died away they still stared in silence, dreadfully, before them. "That fixes it!" gasped one. "Let's go."

"They was his last words," moaned Morgan, "his last words above board."

Dick had his Bible out and was praying volubly. He had been well brought up, had Dick, before he came to sea and fell among bad companions.

Still Silver was unconquered. I

could hear his teeth rattle in his

head, but he had not yet surrendered. "Nobody in this here island ever heard of Darby," he muttered; "not one but us that's here." And then, making a great effort: "Shipmates," he cried, "I'm here to get that stuff,

and I'll not be beat by man or devil. I never was feared of Flint in his life, and, by the powers, I'll face him dead. There's seven hundred thousand pound not a quarter of a mile from here. When did ever a gentleman o' fortune show his stern to that much dollars for a boozy

old seaman with a blue mug—and him dead too?”

But there was no sign of reawakening courage in his followers, rather, indeed, of growing terror at the irreverence of his words.

“Belay there, John!” said Merry. “Don’t you cross a sperrit.”

And the rest were all too terrified to reply. They would have run away severally had they dared; but fear kept them together, and kept them close by John, as if his daring helped them. He, on his part, had pretty well

fought his weakness down. “Sperrit? Well, maybe,” he said. “But there’s one thing not clear to me. There was an echo. Now, no man ever seen a sperrit with a shadow; well then, what’s he doing with an echo to him, I should like to know? That ain’t in natur’, surely?” This argument seemed weak enough to me. But you can never tell what will affect the superstitious, and to my wonder, George Merry was greatly relieved.

“Well, that’s so,” he said. “You’ve a head upon your shoulders, John, and no mistake. ‘Bout ship, mates! This here crew is on a wrong tack, I do

believe. And come to think on it, it was like Flint’s voice, I grant you, but not just so clear-away like it, after all. It was liker somebody else’s voice now—it was liker—” “By the powers, Ben Gunn!” roared Silver.

“Aye, and so it were,” cried Morgan, springing on his knees. “Ben Gunn it were!”

“It don’t make much odds, do it, now?” asked Dick. “Ben Gunn’s not here in the body any more’n Flint.” But the older hands greeted this remark with scorn.

“Why, nobody minds Ben Gunn,” cried Merry; “dead or alive, nobody minds him.”

It was extraordinary how their spirits had returned and how the natural colour had revived in their faces. Soon they were chatting together, with intervals of listening; and not long after, hearing no further sound, they shouldered the tools and set forth again, Merry walking first with Silver’s compass to keep them on the right line with Skeleton

Island. He had said the truth: dead or alive, nobody minded Ben Gunn. Dick alone still held his Bible, and looked around him as he went, with fearful glances; but he found no sympathy, and Silver even joked him

on his precautions.

“I told you,” said he—“I told you you had sp’iled your Bible. If it ain’t no good to swear by, what do you suppose a sperrit would give for it? Not that!” and he snapped his big fingers, halting a moment on his crutch.

But Dick was not to be comforted; indeed, it was soon plain to me that the lad was falling sick; hastened by heat, exhaustion, and the shock of his alarm, the fever, predicted by Dr. Livesey, was evidently growing swiftly higher.

It was fine open walking here, upon the summit; our way lay a little downhill, for, as I have said, the plateau tilted towards the west. The pines, great and small, grew wide apart; and even between the clumps of nutmeg and azalea, wide open spaces baked in the hot sunshine. Striking, as we did, pretty near north-west across the island, we drew, on the one hand, ever nearer under the shoulders of the Spy-glass, and on the other, looked ever wider over that western bay where I had once tossed and trembled in the oracle.

The first of the tall trees was reached, and by the bearings proved the wrong one. So with the second.

The third rose nearly two hundred feet into the air above a clump of underwood—a giant of a vegetable, with a red column as big as a cottage, and a wide shadow around in which a company could have manoeuvred. It was conspicuous far to sea both on the east and west and might have been entered as a sailing mark upon the chart.

But it was not its size that now impressed my companions; it was the knowledge that seven hundred thousand pounds in gold lay somewhere buried below its spreading shadow. The thought of the money, as they drew nearer,

swallowed up their previous terrors. Their eyes burned in their heads; their feet grew speedier and lighter;

their whole soul was found up in that fortune, that whole lifetime of extravagance and pleasure, that lay waiting there for each of them.

Silver hobbled, grunting, on his crutch; his nostrils stood out and quivered; he cursed like a madman when the flies settled on his hot and shiny countenance; he plucked furiously at the line that held me to him and from time to time turned his eyes upon me with a deadly look. Certainly he took no pains to hide his thoughts, and certainly I read

them like print. In the immediate nearness of the gold, all else had been forgotten: his promise and the doctor's warning were both things of the past, and I could not doubt that he hoped to seize upon the treasure,

find and board the HISPANIOLA under cover of night, cut every honest throat about that island, and sail away as he had at first intended, laden with crimes and riches.

Shaken as I was with these alarms, it was hard for me to keep up with the rapid pace of the treasure-hunters. Now and again I stumbled, and it

was then that Silver plucked so roughly at the rope and launched at me his murderous glances. Dick, who had dropped behind us and now brought up the rear, was babbling to himself both prayers and curses as his fever kept rising. This also added to my wretchedness, and to crown all, I was haunted by the thought of the tragedy that had once been acted on that plateau, when that ungodly buccaneer with the blue face—he who died at Savannah, singing and shouting for drink—had there, with his own hand, cut down his six accomplices. This grove that was now so peaceful must then have rung with cries, I thought; and even with the thought I could believe I heard it ringing still.

We were now at the margin of the thicket.

“Huzza, mates, all together!” shouted Merry; and the foremost broke into a run.

And suddenly, not ten yards further, we beheld them stop. A low cry arose. Silver doubled his pace, digging away with the foot of his crutch like one possessed; and next moment he and I had come also to a dead halt.

Before us was a great excavation, not very recent, for the sides had fallen in and grass had sprouted on the bottom. In this were the shaft of a

pick broken in two and the boards of several packing-cases strewn around. On one of these boards I saw, branded with a hot iron, the name WALRUS—the name of Flint’s ship.

All was clear to probation. The CACHE had been found and rifled; the seven hundred thousand pounds were gone!

## Chapter 32

Hulle soek nog Die stem tussen die borne Hierdie ontmoeting het almal heelwat tot bedaring gebring. Om Silver n bietjie te laat uitrus, het die hele geselskap gaan sit sodra as hulle bo-op die hoogste ge-kom het.

Die uitsig wat ons hiervandaan af na alkante toe gekry het, was pragtig. Reg voor ons, dwars oor die toppe van die bome kon ons die Boskaap sien, waarteen die branders wit skuim. Aan die agterkant kyk ons af op die ankerplaas en Geraamte-eiland, en aan die Oostekant le n groot uitgestrektheid oop see. Steil bokant oïis staan die Verkyker, met hier en daar n paar dennebome en verder af, swart afgronde. Die enigste geluid was die geraas van die branders, daar ver, en die gegons van duisende goggatjies in die bosse. Nie n mens nie; nie n seil op die see nie; die groot, leë ruimte rondom ons het die gevoel van eensaamheid net groter gemaak.



Silver kyk gedurig op sy kompas.

Daar is nou drie groot bome, sê hy, omtrent in n lyn met Geraamteiland. Met Verkyker-nek word seker daardie laagste punt bedoel. Dit is nou kinderspeletjies om die goed te kry. Ek het lus om eers iets te eet.

Ek voel nie lekker nie, sê Morgan. Ek dink dis die praterij oor Flint wat my so ontstel het.

Nou ja, ou seun, dank dan maar jou sterre dat hy dood is, sê Silver.

Hy was n lelike duiwel, sê een van die ander, en hy gril. En so blou in sy gesig!

Ja, dit was van al die rum, voeg Merry daarby.

Vandat hulle die geraamte gekry het, en van Flint begin praat het, praat hulle al sagter en sagter, en nou was dit niks meer as n gefluister nie, sodat die stilte van die bos daar skaars deur verbreek word. Skielik klink daar, tussen die bome reg voor ons, n fyn, bewerige stem, wat die welbekende wysie en woorde sing:

Vyftien man op die Dooie se kis,

Jo-ho-ho, en n bottel vol rum.

Ek het nog nooit mense so sien skrik nie. Die ses gesigte word doodsbleek; n paar van hulle spring op, ander klou mekaar vas; Morgan kruip op die grond rond.

Dis Flint! skree Merry, met n groot vloekwoord.

Die liedjie het weer net so skielik opgehou as wat dit begin het, sommer in die middel van n noot, asof iemand sy mond met sy hand toegedruk het. Die geluid, soos dit daar ver tussen die bome uit kom, het vir my mooi geklink, en ek kon nie verstaan hoekom my maats so geweldig skrik nie.

Kom, sê Silver, wat met moeite die een woord oor sy asvaal lippe sukkel, dit sal nie gaan nie. Pluk julle self reg, kereels. Ek ken nie die stem nie, maar ek sweer dit is iemand met vlees en bloed wat daar sing.

Met die woorde het sy moed weer teruggekom, en daar was nou ook weer n bietjie kleur in sy gesig. Die ander begin ook na hom te luister, en effens kalm te word, toe dieselfde stem weer begin. Die slag sing dit nie, maar dit roep, flou en bewerig, en die geluid word nog flouer teen die kranse van die Verkyker weerkaats.

Darby MGrow, klaag die stem, Darby MGrow, Darby MGrow! oor en oor, en toe n bietjie harder, met n vloek, wat ek maar sal weglaat, Haal die rum, Darby!

Die seerowers bly staan net waar hulle was, met oë wat uit hulle kaste puil. Lank nadat die stem weggesteef het, staar hulle nog met die doodsangs op die gesig, voor hulle uit.

Dis die bewys, sê een, Kom ons draai om!

Dit was sy laaste woorde, daardie, kreun Morgan

sy laaste woorde bokant die grond.

Dick het sy Bybel uitgehaal, en bid ywerig. Hy was vroom opgevoed, die Dick, voor hy see toe gegaan, en in slegte geselskap verval het.

Maar Silver gee nog nie in nie. Ek kon sy tande hoor klap, maar opgee is min.

Niemand op hierdie eiland het nog ooit van Darby gehoor nie, mompel hy: niemand buiten ons hier. En toe ruk hy hom met moeite reg. Maats, sê hy, ek is hier om die geld te haal, en ek sal my van geen sterweling of duiwel laat terughou nie. Ek was nooit bang vir Flint toe hy nog geleef het nie, en ek sal vir hom ook nie padgee nou dat hy dood is nie. Daar lê sewehonderdduisend pond minder as n kwart myl hiervandaan. Watter fortuinsoeker het al ooit sy rug na so n hoop goud toe gedraai, en dit vir n ou suiplap, wat nogal dood is daarby?

Maar daar was geen spoor van moed by sy maats te sien nie; hulleangs het eerder nog groter geword toe hy so oneerbiedig praat.

Stadig, John! sê Merry. Mocnie n spook uitdaag nie.

Die ander was te bang om te praat. Hulle sou een vir een weggehardloop het, as hulle dit gewaag het; maar die vrees het hulle bymekaar gehou. Hulle staan al hoe nader aan John, asof sy moed hulle kon beskerm. Hyself het sy kalmte teruggekry.

Spook? Wel, dit kan wees, sê hy. Maar een ding is vir my nie duidelik nie. Daar was n eggo. Geen mens het ooit n spook gesien met n skaduwee nie; nou ja, wat maak hy dan met n eggo? Dit is nie natuurlik nie.

Hierdie argument het vir my baie swak gelyk, maar n mens kan nooit weet wat n bygelowige sal glo nie. Tot my verbasing het dit George Merry baie gerusgestel.

Ja, dit is waar, sê hy. Jy het n kop op jou skouers, John, dis seker. Vooruit, maats! Ons is van die wysie

af. En nou dat ek daaraan dink, die stem was soos Flint sn, maar net nie so helder nie. Dit was meer soos iemand anders sn meer soos

Soos Ben Gunn sn! bulder Silver.

Ja, wraggies, dit was! skree Morgan, en hy kom half orent.

Dit maak nie baie onderskeid nie, maak dit? vra Dick, Ben Gunn is ook nie met sy liggaam hier nie net so min as Flint.

Maar die ander begroet hierdie opmerking met ver-agting.

Ag! Wie gee om vir Ben Gunn? vra Merry. Dood of lewendig, niemand is bang vir Ben Gunn nie.

Dit was wonderlik om te sien hoe opgeruimd hulle nou lyk; hulle wange het waarlik weer n bietjie kleur gekry. Hulle was gou weer aan gesels, maar nou en dan luister hulle darem weer so n slaggie. Toe alles doodstil bly, vat elkeen weer sy stuk gereedskap, en die tog gaan verder, met Merry voorop, Silver se kompas in sy hand, om die regte

lyn met Geraamte-eiland aan te wys. Dis waar wat hy gesê het: dood of lewendig, niemand was bang vir Ben Gunn nie.

Net Dick hou nog sy Bybel styf vas, en loer benoud om hom heen, sover as, hy loop. Maar niemand troos hom nie, en Silver spot selfs met hom.

Ek het mos vir jou gesê, terg hy. , Jy het jou Bybel bederf. As dit nie meer goed genoeg is om op te sweer nie, wat dink jy sal n spook daarom gee? Nie soveel nie! en hy klap met sy groot vingers, terwyl hy n oomblik stilstaan op sy kruk.

Maar Dick was nie gerus nie; en ek kon gou sien dat hy siek was. Die koors wat Dokter Livesey voorspel het, en wat deur die hitte, vermoeienis, en skok verhaas was, word vinnig erger.

Hier, bo-op die plaat, was dit lekker om te loop; ons gaan n bietjie afdraand, na die Westekant toe. Die dennebome staan hier wyd uit mekaar uit, en selfs tussen die klompies neut en asalea le daar groot oop plekke, wat bak in die son. Aan die een kant was die nek van die Verkyker, waarheen ons reis gaan, en, aan die ander kant was die baai waar ek eenmaal geleë en bid het in die kano.

By die eerste groot boom het ons stilgestaan, maar, volgens die kompas, was dit die verkeerde. So ook met die tweede. Die derde was goed twee honderd voet hoog; n reus van n boom, met n stam so wyd as een huis, en n breë skaduwee, waaronder n hele afdeling soldate sou kon maneuvreer. Van Ooste en Weste kon dit van die see af gesien word, en sou as n teken kon gedien het as baken vir n skip.

Maar dit was nie sy grootte wat nou so n indruk op my maats maak nie; dit was die feit dat daar ęrens onder sy skaduwee sewe honderd duisend pond begrawe lê. Hoe nader hulle aan die boom kom, hoe meer neem geldgierigheid by hulle die plek in van vrees. Hulle oë skitter; hulle voete word al haastiger; hulle hele siel was in daardie skat, wat daar vir elkeen le en wag, en wat aan elkeen n lewe van losbandigheid en plesier belowe.

Silver hink steun-steun voort op sy kruk. Sy neusgate staan wyd oop, en beef; hy vloek soos n rasende as daar n vlieg gaan sit op sy blinkwarm gesig; hy pluk woedend aan die lyn wat my aan hom vasbind, en elke slag gee hy my n kyk asof hy my wou vermoor. Hy het nie die minste moeite gedoen om sy gedagte te verberg nie, en ek het dit gelees soos n ope boek. In die nabyheid van die goud het hy alles vergeet: sy belofte, en die waarskuwing van die dokter, dit alles behoort nou aan die verlede. Ek was seker daarvan dat hy hoop om die skat in hande te kry, en dan die Hispaniola op te soek, iedere man, wat nie tot sy volgeling behoort nie, keelaf te sny, en dan weg te seil soos sy eerste plan gewees het, belaaï met misdade en goud.

Ek was so geskok deur onrus, dat ek skaars kon byhou by die

vinnige draf van die goudsoekers. Nou en dan het ek dan ook gestruikel; en dan gee Silver my n ruwe ruk, en kyk my met moordenaars-oë aan. Dick het ver agter geraak, en babbel nou vloeke en gebede deurmekaar, want sy koors word al hoe strawwer. Dit het my nog ellendiger laat voel, en, om die kroon op alles te sit, het die gedagte aan die bloedige treurspel my vervolg, toe daardie goddelose ou seeskuimer met die blou gesig

hy wat op Savannah dood is, en tot die laaste toe nog geskreeu het om drank toe hy met sy eie hand hier sy ses helpers omgebring het. Hierdie bos, wat nou so rustig was, het toe seker weergalm van hulle doodskrete; en ek verbeel my dat ek dit nou nog hoor!

Ons was nou aan die kant van die stuk bosveld.

Hoera, maats, almal saam! skree Merry; en die voorstes begin te hardloop.

Skielik, geen tien tree verder nie, sien ons hulle bly staan. Hulle praat almal deurmekaar. Silver loop so al wat hy kan, en werk vorentoe met sy kruk soos n besetene; en die volgende oomblik staan ons twee ook by die ander.

Voor ons was n groot kuil, en dit was lank al gegrawe, want die kante was ingestort en op die boom groei die gras al. Hierin lê die stukkende steel van n pik, en die planke van verskeie kiste lê daar rond. Op een van die planke kon ek nog die naam lees, ingebrand met n warm yster, van Flint se skip, die Walrus.

Alles was so duidelik as die dag. Iemand het die bēre-plek ontdek, en geplunder: die sewehonderdduisend pond was weg!

# Chapter 33

## The Fall of a Chieftain

THERE never was such an overturn in this world. Each of these six men was as though he had been struck. But with Silver the blow passed

almost instantly. Every thought of his soul had been set full-stretch, like a racer, on that money; well, he was brought up, in a single second, dead; and he kept his head, found his temper, and changed his plan before the others had had time to realize the disappointment.

"Jim," he whispered, "take that, and stand by for trouble."

And he passed me a double-barrelled pistol.

At the same time, he began quietly moving northward, and in a few steps had put the hollow between us two and the other five. Then he looked at me and nodded, as much as

to say, "Here is a narrow corner," as, indeed, I thought it was. His looks were not quite friendly, and I was so revolted at these constant changes that I could not forbear whispering, "So you've changed sides again."

There was no time left for him to answer in. The buccaneers, with oaths and cries, began to leap, one after another, into the pit and to dig with their fingers, throwing the boards aside as they did so. Morgan found a piece of gold. He held it up with a perfect spout of oaths. It was

a two-guinea piece, and it went from hand to hand among them for a quarter of a minute.

"Two guineas!" roared Merry, shaking it at Silver. "That's your seven hundred thousand pounds, is it? You're the man for bargains, ain't you? You're him that never bungled nothing, you wooden-headed lubber!"

"Dig away, boys," said Silver with the coolest insolence; "you'll find some pig-nuts and I shouldn't wonder."

"Pig-nuts!" repeated Merry, in a scream. "Mates, do you hear that? I tell you now, that man there knew it all along. Look in the face of him and you'll see it wrote there."

"Ah, Merry," remarked Silver, "standing for cap'n again? You're a pushing lad, to be sure."

But this time everyone was entirely in Merry's favour. They began to scramble out of the excavation, darting furious glances behind them. One thing I observed, which looked well for us: they all got out upon the opposite side from Silver.

Well, there we stood, two on one side, five on the other, the pit between us, and nobody screwed up high enough to offer the first blow. Silver never moved; he watched them, very upright on his crutch, and looked as cool as ever I saw him.

He was brave, and no mistake. At last Merry seemed to think a speech might help matters. "Mates," says he, "there's two of them alone there; one's the old

cripple that brought us all here and blundered us down to this; the other's that cub that I mean to have the heart of. Now, mates—"

He was raising his arm and his voice, and plainly meant to lead a charge. But just then—crack! crack! crack!— three musket-shots flashed out of the thicket. Merry tumbled head foremost into the excavation;

the man with the bandage spun round like a teetotum and fell all his length

upon his side, where he lay dead, but still twitching; and the other three turned and ran for it with all their might.

Before you could wink, Long John had fired two barrels of a pistol into the struggling Merry, and as the man rolled up his eyes at him in the last agony, "George," said he, "I reckon I settled you."

At the same moment, the doctor, Gray, and Ben Gunn joined us, with smoking muskets, from among the nutmeg-trees.

"Forward!" cried the doctor. "Double quick, my lads. We must head 'em off the boats."

And we set off at a great pace, sometimes plunging through the bushes to the chest.

I tell you, but Silver was anxious to keep up with us. The work that man went through, leaping on his crutch till the muscles of his chest were fit to burst, was work no sound man ever equalled; and so thinks the doctor. As it was, he was already thirty yards behind us and on the verge of strangling when we reached the brow of the slope.

"Doctor," he hailed, "see there! No hurry!"

Sure enough there was no hurry. In a more open part of the plateau, we

could see the three survivors still running in the same direction as they had started, right for Mizzenmast Hill. We were already between them and the boats; and so we four sat down to breathe, while Long John, mopping his face, came slowly up with us.

"Thank ye kindly, doctor," says he. "You came in in about the nick, I guess, for me and Hawkins. And so it's you, Ben Gunn!" he added.

"Well, you're a nice one, to be sure." "I'm Ben Gunn, I am," replied the maroon, wriggling like an eel in his embarrassment. "And," he added, after a long pause, "how do, Mr.

Silver? Pretty well, I thank ye, says you."

“Ben, Ben,” murmured Silver, “to think as you’ve done me!”

The doctor sent back Gray for one of the pick-axes deserted, in their flight, by the mutineers, and then as we proceeded leisurely downhill to where the boats were lying, related in a few words what had taken place. It was a story that profoundly interested Silver; and Ben Gunn, the

half-idiot maroon, was the hero from beginning to end.

Ben, in his long, lonely wanderings about the island, had found the skeleton—it was he that had rifled it;

he had found the treasure; he had dug it up (it was the haft of his pick-axe that lay broken in the excavation); he had carried it on his back, in many weary journeys, from the foot of the tall pine to a cave he had on the two-pointed hill at the north-east angle of the island, and there it had lain

stored in safety since two months before the arrival of the HISPANIOLA.

When the doctor had wormed this secret from him on the afternoon of the attack, and when next morning he saw the anchorage deserted, he had gone to Silver, given him the chart, which was now useless—given him

the stores, for Ben Gunn’s cave was well supplied with goats’ meat salted by himself—given anything and everything to get a chance of moving in safety from the stockade to the two-pointed hill, there to be clear of malaria and keep a guard upon the money.

“As for you, Jim,” he said, “it went against my heart, but I did what I thought best for those who had stood by their duty; and if you were not

one of these, whose fault was it?” That morning, finding that I was to be involved in the horrid disappointment he had prepared for the mutineers, he had run all the way

to the cave, and leaving the squire to guard the captain, had taken Gray

and the maroon and started, making the diagonal across the island to be at hand beside the pine. Soon, however, he saw that our party had the start of him; and Ben Gunn, being fleet of foot, had been dispatched in front to do his best alone. Then it

had occurred to him to work upon the superstitions of his former shipmates, and he was so far successful that Gray and the doctor had come up and were already ambushed before the arrival of the treasure-hunters.

“Ah,” said Silver, “it were fortunate

for me that I had Hawkins here. You would have let old John be cut to bits, and never given it a thought, doctor.”

“Not a thought,” replied Dr. Livesey cheerily.

And by this time we had reached the gigs. The doctor, with the pick-axe, demolished one of them, and then we all got aboard the other and set out to go round by sea for North Inlet.

This was a run of eight or nine miles. Silver, though he was almost killed already with fatigue, was set to an oar, like the rest of us, and we were soon skimming swiftly over a smooth sea. Soon we passed out of

the straits and doubled the south-east corner of the island, round which, four days ago, we had towed the HISPANIOLA.

As we passed the two-pointed hill, we could see the black mouth of Ben Gunn's cave and a figure standing by it, leaning on a musket. It was the squire, and we waved a

handkerchief and gave him three cheers, in which the voice of Silver joined as heartily as any.

Three miles farther, just inside the mouth of North Inlet, what should we meet but the HISPANIOLA, cruising by herself? The last flood had lifted her, and had there been much wind

or a strong tide current, as in the southern anchorage, we should never have found her more, or found her stranded beyond help. As it was, there was little amiss beyond the wreck of the main-sail. Another anchor was got ready and dropped in a fathom and a half of water. We all pulled round again to Rum Cove, the nearest point for Ben Gunn's

treasure-house; and then Gray,

single-handed, returned with the gig to the HISPANIOLA, where he was to pass the night on guard.

A gentle slope ran up from the beach to the entrance of the cave. At the

top, the squire met us. To me he was

cordial and kind, saying nothing of my escapade either in the way of blame or praise. At Silver's polite salute he somewhat flushed.

"John Silver," he said, "you're a prodigious villain and imposter—a monstrous imposter, sir. I am told I am not to prosecute you. Well, then, I will not. But the dead men, sir, hang about your neck like mill-stones."

"Thank you kindly, sir," replied

Long John, again saluting.

"I dare you to thank me!" cried the squire. "It is a gross dereliction of my duty. Stand back."

And thereupon we all entered the

cave. It was a large, airy place, with a little spring and a pool of clear water, overhung with ferns. The

floor was sand. Before a big fire lay Captain Smollett; and in a far corner, only duskily flickered over by the blaze, I beheld great heaps



of coin and quadrilaterals built of bars of gold. That was Flint's treasure that we had come so far to seek and that had cost already the lives of seventeen men from the HISPANIOLA. How many it had cost in the amassing, what blood and sorrow, what good ships scuttled on the deep, what brave men walking the plank blindfold, what shot of

cannon, what shame and lies and cruelty, perhaps no man alive could tell. Yet there were still three upon that island—Silver, and old Morgan, and Ben Gunn—who had each taken his share in these crimes, as each had hoped in vain to share in the reward.

"Come in, Jim," said the captain. "You're a good boy in your line, Jim, but I don't think you and me'll go to sea again. You're too much of the born favourite for me. Is that you, John Silver? What brings you here, man?"

"Come back to my dooty, sir," returned Silver.

"Ah!" said the captain, and that was all he said.

What a supper I had of it that night, with all my friends around me; and what a meal it was, with Ben Gunn's salted goat and some delicacies and a bottle of old wine from the HISPANIOLA. Never, I am sure, were people gayer or happier. And there was Silver, sitting back almost out of the firelight, but eating heartily, prompt to spring forward when anything was wanted, even joining quietly in our laughter—the same bland, polite, obsequious seaman of the voyage out.

# Chapter 33

## Die val van n hoofman

Die uitwerking van hierdie skouspel was onbeskryflik. Die ses mans staan daar asof hulle versteen was. Maar by Silver het die skrik slegs n oomblik geduur. Sy hele siel was op daardie geld gevestig gewees, en die vooruitsig was hom nou in een oomblik ontnem; en tog bly hy by sy positiewe, en verander van plan voordat die ander tyd had om van hulle teleurstelling te bekom.

Jim, fluister hy, vat dit, en staan my by as dit nodig is. En hy druk n pistool met dubbele loop in my hand.

Toe stap hy bedaard na die ander kant van die kuil, sodat ons twee nou eenkant staan, en die ander vyf aan die oorkant. Hy knik vir my, asof hy wou sê: Hier is n nou draai, en waarlik, so het dit vir my ook gelyk. Hy kyk my nou ewe vriendelik aan; en die gedurige veranderinge het my so gewalg, dat ek nie kon help om te fluister nie: So, dan is jy nou al weer aan die ander kant!

Daar was geen tyd vir hom om te antwoord nie. Die rowers begin een vir een, onder gevloek en geskreue, in die kuil af te spring. Hulle grawe met hulle vingers, en gooi die planke opsy. Morgan het n goudstuk gekry, en hy hou dit op in die lug onder n stortvloed van vloeke. Dit was n twee-ghieniestuk, en dit gaan van een hand na die ander.

Twee ghienies! brul Merry, en hy skud dit na Silver se kant toe. Is dit jou sewehonderdduisend pond? Is dit die danige ooreenkoms wat jy gemaak het? En dan sê jy nog jy het nooit n saak bederf nie, jou eselskop!

Grawe maar, kerele, sê Silver, so ewe onbeskaamd; altemits kry julle n paar grondboontjies.

Grondboontjies! skree Merry. Maats hoor julle dit? Ek sê vir julle, daardie man het alles daarvan geweet. Kyk in sy gesig, en julle sal sien dit staan daar geskryf. So, Merry, sê Silver, speel jy al weer kaptein? Dis waar, jys darem n voorbarige seun.

Maar die slag was iedereen aan Merry se kant. Hulle begin uit die kuil uit te klouter, en kyk woedend om na ons toe. Ek het een ding opgemerk wat baie in ons voordeel was: hulle klim almal uit aan die kant wat regoor ons was.

Daar staan ons toe, twee aan die een kant, vyf aan die ander, met die kuil tussen ons, en niemand klaar om die eerste slag te slaan nie. Silver beweeg nie. Hy staan regop, kruk onder die arm, en lyk so koel soos ek hom nog nooit gesien het nie. Hy was glad nie bang nie, dis

seker.

Eindelik het Merry blykbaar gedink dat dit sou help om n paar woorde te se.

Maats, sê hy, daars net twee van hulle daar anderkant: een is die ou kreupel vent wat ons almal hier gebring het en ons in al die ellende gestort het; die ander is daardie kwaaijong wat ek die hart uit die lyf uit wil pluk. Toe, maats....

Hy tel sy arm op, en dit was duidelik dat hy meen om te storm. Maar krak, krak, krak! val daar drie skote agter mekaar van die bosse se kant af. Merry rol halsoorkop in die kuil in; die man met die doek om die kop draai soos n tol in die rondte, en val so lank as hy is op sy linkersy neer, dood, maar nog in stuiptrek-kings. Die ander drie spring om, en laat vat so al wat hulle kan.

In n oogwenk het Long John twee skote afgeskiet op Merry, wat spartel om op te staan; en toe die man in die doodstryd sy oë na hom toe opslaan, sê hy: Ek glo ons het nou afgereken.

Op dieselfde oomblik kom die dokter, Gray en Ben Gunn by ons, geweer in die hand.

Voorwaarts! roep die dokter. Gou, maats. Ons moet voor hulle by die bote wees.

En ons loop so wat ons kan, partymaal tot aan die bors deur die bossies. Silver het sy uiterste bes gedoen om by te bly. Die inspanning wat daardie man deurgemaak het, soos hy daar op sy kruk voortspring, totdat dit lyk of die spiere van sy bors sou bars, was meer as wat n gesonde man ooit kon regkry; en die dokter dink ook so. Hy was reeds n dertig jaarts agter ons, en amper verwurg, toe ons bo op die rant uitkom.

Dokter, hyg hy, kyk daar! Geen haas!

En waarlik, dit was so. Op n ope plek tussen die bosse kon ons die drie wat oorgebly het, sien hardloop, nog altyd in dieselfde rigting soos hulle begin het, na een van die koppe toe. Ons was alreeds tussen hulle en die bote; en dus gaan ons vier nou sit om asem te skep. Long John vee sy gesig af, en kom langsaam na ons toe.

Baie dankie, dokter, sê hy. U het net betyds gekom, vir my en Hawkins. So, dan is dit jy, Ben Gunn! voeg hy daarby. Jy is n mooi een, hoor.

Ek is Ben Gunn, ja, ek is, antwoord die arme vent, en hy krul sy lyf rond soos n wurm, so verleë was hy. En na n lang ruk, vra hy, hoe gaan dit, meneer Silver? Goed, dankie, sê u.

Ben, Ben, sê Silver binnesmonds, om te dink dat jy my so n poets gespeel het.

Die dokter stuur toe vir Gray terug om een van die pikke te gaan haal wat die rowers in hulle haas laat lê het; en daarna stap ons op ons gemak die heuwel af na die plek toe waar die bote le. Op pad

daarheen vertel die dokter ons wat gebeur het. Dit was n verhaal waarin Silver die grootste belang gestel het, en Ben Gunn, die halfgek verstoteling, was die held van begin tot end.

Ben, op sy lang, eensame swerftogte, het op die geraamte afgekom, dit was hy wat alles daar af gesteel het. Hy het die skat gekry; hy het dit opgegrawe, (dit was sy pik se steel wat stukkend le in die kuil). Op sy rug het hy dit weggedra, op ontelbare vermoeiende togte, van die voet van die hoë boom af, na n grot in die Noordoostelike hoek van die eiland, en daar lê dit nou al twee maande veilig weggebêre .

Die middag na die aanval het die dokter die geheim uit hom uit gekry, en die volgende more, toe hy sien dat die skip weg is uit die baai, het hy na Silver toe gegaan, vir hom die kaart gegee, wat vir hom nou niks beteken nie, vor hom al ons eetware gegee, want Ben Gunn se grot was vol bokvleis wat hy self gesout het

in een woord, alles gegee om tog maar n kans te kry om uit die blokhuis weg te kom, na die heuwels toe, waar daar geen gevaar sou wees van koors nie, en waar hulle die goud kon bewaak.

Wat jou betref, Jim, sê hy, my hart was seer oor jou, maar ek het gedoen wat vir my die beste gelyk het vir die manne wat getrou gebly het op hulle pos, en as jy nie een van hulle was nie, wie se skuld was dit?

Die oggend, toe hy uitvind dat ek onder die seerowers verval was, het hy die hele pad na die grot toe gehardloop, die squire agtergelaat om na die kaptein te kyk, en toe vir Gray en Ben geneem en afgesit na die groot boom toe. Maar hy het gou gesien dat ons geselskap voor hom daar sou wees; en daarom het hy Ben Gunn, wat baie vinnig kon loop, vooruit gestuur, om te doen wat hy kan. Dit het in die ou se kop gekom om sy gewese skeepsmaats bang te maak. Dit het hom so goed geluk, dat Gray en die dokter die plek kon haal en tussen die bosse wegkruip voor die fortuinsoekers daar aan-kom.

Ja , sê Silver, dit was my geluk dat ek Hawkins by my gehad het. U sal arme ou John aan toutjies laat sny het, en daar nooit weer aan gedink het nie, dokter.

Nooit weer nie, sê Dokter Livesey, ewe opgeruimd.

Teen die tyd was ons by die bote. Met die pik het die dokter een van hulle stukkend gekap, en toe het ons almal in die ander een geklim, om oor see by North Inlet te kom.

Dit was n tog van sowat agt of nege myl. Silver so moeg as hy was, moes help roei, en gou-gou gly ons vinnig oor die blou water, deur die nou poort, en om die hoek van die eiland, waar ons vier dae tevore die Hispaniola ingesleep het.

Toe ons by die heuwel met die twee spits punte verby roei, kon ons die swart bek van Ben Gunn se grot sien, en n man daarvoor, wat op sy geweer leun. Dit was die squire, en ons het vir hom gewuif met n

sakdoek, en drie hoeras gegee, waarin Silver net so hard as een van ons geskree het.

Drie myl verder, net binne in North Inlet, ontmoet ons die Hispaniola, wat op sy eie houtjie rondvaar! Die hoogwater het die skip laat dryf, en as daar sterk wind gewees het, of n vinnige stroming, sou ons dit nooit weer gesien het nie, of anders net die wrak gekry het. Nou was daar nie veel verkeer nie, behalwe dat die groot seil aan flenters geskeur was. Ons het gou n ander anker reggemaak, en dit laat val in een en n half vaders water. Ons het weer met die boot verder gegaan, tot so na aan Ben Gunn se skatkamer as ons kon, en toe het Gray alleen omgedraai met die skuit na die Hispaniola toe, waar hy die nag sou waghou.

Voor die bek van die grot het die squire ons ontmoet. Teen my was hy net so hartlik soos altyd, en het nie n woord van my weglopery gesê nie, maar toe Silver hom ewe beleef groet, word hy bloedrooi.

John Silver, sê hy, jy is n baie groot skurk en bedrieër. Ek hoor ek mag jou nie vervolg nie. Nou goed, maar die dooie mense sal soos meulstene om jou hals hang.

Dankie vriendelik, meneer, sê Silver met n saluut.

Ek wil glad nie jou dank he nie, sê die squire, dis n skandelijke versuim van my plig. Gee pad!

Toe gaan ons almal die grot in. Dit was n groot, lugtige plek, met n fonteintjie, en n poel helder water, waaroor varings hang. Die vloer was sanderig. Voor n groot vuur le Kaptein Smollett; en in die verste hoek sien ek groot hope muntstukke skitter, en goudstawe wat in groot vierkante gepak was. Dit was ou Flint se skat, wat ons so ver kom soek het, en wat alreeds die dood van sewentien mense gekos het. Geen mens op aarde kon vertel hoeveel bloed en trane, hoeveel leuens en misdade, dit gekos het om dit bymekaar te maak nie, watter goeie skepe gesink het, hoeveel dapper manne geblinddoek die plank moes oorstap nie. Tog was daar nog drie op die eiland, Silver, en ou Morgan, en Ben Gunn, wat elkeen n aandeel gehad het in hierdie misdade, soos elkeen ook tevergeefs gehoop het om n deel van die buit te kry.

Kom in, Jim, sê die kaptein. Jy is op jou manier n goeie seun, Jim; maar ek glo nie jy en ek sal weer saam see toe gaan nie. Jy is te veel van n bedorwe gunsteling na my sin. Is dit tog nie jy nie, Silver? Wat kom jy hier maak, man?

Ek kom terug na my plig toe, meneer, sê Silver.

So! was al wat die kaptein sê.

Hoe heerlik het die kos die aand gesmaak, met al my vriende om my heen! Daar was gedroogde bokvleis, en n paar lekkernye met n bottel ou wyn van die Hispaniola af. Daar was seker nog nooit son vrolike geselskap nie. Silver sit een kant, amper in die donker, maar hy eet

smaaklik, en hy was rats om alles aan te gee wat nodig was, hy lag selfs nou en dan saggies saam dieselfde beleefde en gewillige man van voorheen.

# Chapter 34

## And Last

THE next morning we fell early to work, for the transportation of this great mass of gold near a mile by land to the beach, and thence three miles by boat to the HISPANIOLA, was a considerable task for so small a number of workmen. The three fellows still abroad upon the island did not greatly trouble us; a single sentry on the shoulder of the hill was sufficient to ensure us against any sudden onslaught, and we thought, besides, they had had more than enough of fighting.

Therefore the work was pushed on briskly. Gray and Ben Gunn came and went with the boat, while the rest during their absences piled treasure on the beach. Two of the bars, slung in a rope's end, made a good load for a grown man—one that he was glad to walk slowly with.

For my part, as I was not much use at carrying, I was kept busy all day in the cave packing the minted money into bread-bags.

It was a strange collection, like Billy Bones's hoard for the diversity of coinage, but so much larger and so much more varied that I think I never had more pleasure than in sorting them. English, French, Spanish,

Portuguese, Georges, and Louises, doubloons and double guineas and moidores and sequins, the pictures

of all the kings of Europe for the last hundred years, strange Oriental pieces stamped with what looked like wisps of string or bits of spider's web, round pieces and square pieces, and pieces bored through the middle, as if to wear them round your neck—nearly every variety of money in the world must, I think, have found a place in that collection; and for number, I am sure they were like autumn leaves, so that my back ached with stooping and my fingers with sorting them out.

Day after day this work went on; by every evening a fortune had been stowed aboard, but there was another fortune waiting for the morrow; and all this time we heard nothing of the three surviving mutineers.

At last—I think it was on the third night—the doctor and I were strolling on the shoulder of the hill where it overlooks the lowlands of the isle, when, from out the thick darkness below, the wind brought us a noise between shrieking and singing. It

was only a snatch that reached our ears, followed by the former silence. "Heaven forgive them," said the

doctor; "'tis the mutineers!"

"All drunk, sir," struck in the voice of Silver from behind us.

Silver, I should say, was allowed his entire liberty, and in spite of daily rebuffs, seemed to regard himself once more as quite a privileged and friendly dependent. Indeed, it was remarkable how well he bore these slights and with what unwearying politeness he kept on trying to ingratiate himself with all. Yet, I think, none treated him better than a dog, unless it was Ben Gunn, who was still terribly afraid of his old quartermaster, or myself, who had really something to thank him

for; although for that matter, I suppose, I had reason to think even worse of him than anybody else, for I had seen him meditating a fresh treachery upon the plateau. Accordingly, it was pretty gruffly that the doctor answered him. "Drunk or raving," said he.

"Right you were, sir," replied Silver; "and precious little odds which, to you and me."

"I suppose you would hardly ask me to call you a humane man," returned the doctor with a sneer, "and so my feelings may surprise you, Master Silver. But if I were sure they were raving—as I am morally certain one,

at least, of them is down with fever—I should leave this camp, and at whatever risk to my own carcass, take them the assistance of my skill." "Ask your pardon, sir, you would be very wrong," quoth Silver. "You would lose your precious life, and you may lay to that. I'm on your side now, hand and glove; and I shouldn't wish for to see the party weakened, let alone yourself, seeing as I know what I owes you. But these men

down there, they couldn't keep their word—no, not supposing they wished to; and what's more, they couldn't believe as you could." "No," said the doctor. "You're the man to keep your word, we know that."

Well, that was about the last news we had of the three pirates. Only once we heard a gunshot a great way off and supposed them to be hunting. A council was held, and it was decided that we must desert them on the island—to the huge glee, I must say, of Ben Gunn, and with the

strong approval of Gray. We left a good stock of powder and shot, the bulk of the salt goat, a few medicines, and some other necessities, tools, clothing, a spare sail, a fathom or two of rope, and by the particular desire of the doctor, a handsome present of tobacco.

That was about our last doing on the island. Before that, we had got the treasure stowed and had shipped enough water and the remainder of the goat meat in case of any distress; and at last, one fine morning,



we weighed anchor, which was about all that we could manage, and stood out of North Inlet, the same colours flying that the captain had flown and fought under at the palisade.

The three fellows must have been watching us closer than we thought for, as we soon had proved. For coming through the narrows, we had to lie very near the southern point, and there we saw all three of them kneeling together on a spit of sand, with their arms raised in supplication. It went to all our hearts, I think, to leave them in that wretched state; but we could not risk another mutiny; and to take them

home for the gibbet would have been a cruel sort of kindness. The doctor hailed them and told them of the stores we had left, and where they were to find them. But they continued to call us by name and appeal to us, for God's sake, to be merciful and not leave them to die in such a place.

At last, seeing the ship still bore on her course and was now swiftly drawing out of earshot, one of them—I know not which it was—leapt to his feet with a hoarse cry, whipped his musket to his shoulder, and sent a shot whistling over Silver's head and through the main-sail.

After that, we kept under cover of the bulwarks, and when next I looked out they had disappeared from the spit, and the spit itself had almost melted out of sight in the growing distance. That was, at least, the end of that; and before noon, to my inexpressible joy, the highest rock of Treasure Island had sunk into the blue round of sea.

We were so short of men that everyone on board had to bear a hand—only the captain lying on a mattress in the stern and giving his orders, for though greatly recovered he was still in want of quiet. We laid her head for the nearest port in Spanish America, for we could not risk the voyage home without fresh hands; and as it was, what with baffling winds and a couple of fresh gales, we were all worn out before we reached it.

It was just at sundown when we cast anchor in a most beautiful land-locked gulf, and were immediately surrounded by shore boats full of Negroes and Mexican Indians and half-bloods selling fruits and vegetables and offering to dive for bits of money. The sight of so many good-humoured faces (especially the blacks), the taste of the tropical fruits, and above all the lights that began to shine in the town made a most charming contrast to our dark and bloody sojourn on the island; and the doctor and the squire, taking me along with them, went ashore to pass the early part of the night. Here they met the captain of

an English man-of-war, fell in talk with him, went on board his ship, and, in short, had so agreeable a time that day was breaking when we came alongside the HISPANIOLA.

Ben Gunn was on deck alone, and as soon as we came on board he began, with wonderful contortions, to make us a confession. Silver was gone. The maroon had connived at his escape in a shore boat some hours ago, and he now assured us he had only done so to preserve our lives, which would certainly have been forfeit if "that man with the one leg had stayed aboard." But this was not all. The sea-cook had not gone

empty-handed. He had cut through a bulkhead unobserved and had removed one of the sacks of coin,

worth perhaps three or four hundred guineas, to help him on his further wanderings.

I think we were all pleased to be so cheaply quit of him.

Well, to make a long story short, we got a few hands on board, made a good cruise home, and the HISPANIOLA reached Bristol just as Mr. Blandly was beginning to think of fitting out her consort. Five men only of those who had sailed returned with her. "Drink and the devil had done for the rest," with a vengeance, although, to be sure, we were not quite in so bad a case as that other ship they sang about:

With one man of her crew alive, What put to sea with seventy-five. All of us had an ample share of the treasure and used it wisely or foolishly, according to our natures.

Captain Smollett is now retired from the sea. Gray not only saved his money, but being suddenly smit with the desire to rise, also studied his profession, and he is now mate and part owner of a fine full-rigged ship, married besides, and the father of a family. As for Ben Gunn, he got a thousand pounds, which he spent or lost in three weeks, or to be more exact, in nineteen days, for he was back begging on the twentieth. Then

he was given a lodge to keep, exactly as he had feared upon the island; and he still lives, a great favourite, though something of a butt, with the country boys, and a notable singer in church on Sundays and saints' days.

Of Silver we have heard no more. That formidable seafaring man with one leg has at last gone clean out of my life; but I dare say he met his old Negress, and perhaps still lives in comfort with her and Captain Flint.

It is to be hoped so, I suppose, for his chances of comfort in another world are very small.

The bar silver and the arms still lie,

for all that I know, where Flint buried them; and certainly they shall lie there for me. Oxen and wain-ropes would not bring me back again

to that accursed island; and the worst dreams that ever I have are when I hear the surf booming about its coasts or start upright in bed with the sharp voice of Captain Flint still ringing in my ears: "Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!"

# Chapter 34

## Huis toe

Die volgende more het ons vroeg aan die werk gespring, want dit was nie n gemaklike taak vir son klein handjievul mense, om die groot massa goud byna n myl ver oor land te dra na die kus toe nie, en daarvandaan drie myl per boot na die Hispaniola toe. Ons het min bekommerd gevoel oor die drie kerels wat nog rond-swerf op die eiland; een skildwag op die heuwel was genoeg om ons teen n onverwagte aanval te beveilig, en buitendien was ons seker daarvan dat hulle al moeg was van baklei.

Ons het dus vinnig gevorder met die werk. Gray en Benn Gunn het met die boot gekom en gegaan solank as die ander die goud op n hoop dra langs die strand. Twee van die goudstawe, met n stuk tou vasgemaak, was n goeie drag vir n groot man en hy was dan ook maar bly om stadig te stap daarmee. Ek was nie van veel nut as n draer nie, en dus het hulle my die hele dag besig gehou in die grot met die inpak van muntstukke in broodsakke.

Dit was n wonderlike versameling, alle soorte geldstukke, net soos die in Billy Bones se kis, en dit was vir my baie mooi om hulle uit te soek. Engelse, Franse, Spaanse, Portugese, Georges en Louises, doebloene en dubbel ghienies, en moidores en sequine, met die koppe van al die konings van Europa vir die laaste honderd jaar, snaakse Oosterse muntstukke met n stempel daar-op wat lyk soos stukkies tou, of spinnerak, ronde stukke, vierkante stukke, ander met n gat deur die middel, asof dit om die nek moes gedra word. Daar was seker nie n soort geld op die wêreld wat nie in daardie versameling te vinde was nie; en daar was so n menigte dat my rug seer was van buk, en my vingers van sorteer.

Dag na dag het die werk aangehou; iedere aand was daar n fortuin aan boord gebring, en lê daar nog n fortuin klaar vir die volgende more. En al die tyd het ons niks gehoor van die drie muiters wat agtergebly het nie.

Eindelik, ek dink dit was die derde aand stap die dokter en ek langs die heuwel af, waar n mens uitsig kry op die laer gedeeltes van die eiland. Skielik kom daar uit die dik duisternis onder in die vlei n geluid tussen skree en sing. Net n paar flou klanke het ons oor bereik, en toe volg die vorige stilte weer.

Mag die Hemel hulle help, sê die dokter, dis die muiters!

Almal dronk, meneer, klink Silver se stem agter ons.

Silver, moet ek hier vertel, was toegelaat om te doen wat hy wou,

en, ten spyte van die minagende behandeling wat hy elke dag moes ondervind, lyk dit asof hy hom verbeel dat hy n gunsteling onder ons was. Dit was waarlik snaaks om te sien hoe goed hy al die beledigings verdra, en hoe onvermoeid hy probeer om in almal se guns te kom. En tog het niemand hom beter as n hond behandel nie; of dit moes Ben Gunn gewees het, wat nog altyd n groot vrees had vir sy ou offisier, of ek, wat darem werklik iets had om hom voor dankbaar te wees. En tog het ek gesien hoe hy opnuut verraad in die sin had, die dag daar op die plato!

Die dokter antwoord hom maar bietjie kortaf.

Dronk of deurmekaar van die koors, se hy.

Ja, juis, meneer, sê Silver, en dit maak ook glad nie saak vir ons nie, meneer.

Jy verwag seker nie dat ek jou n mensliewende mens moet noem nie, antwoord die dokter spottend, en dus sal jy seker verwonder wees om te hoor hoe ek oor die saak dink, meneer Silver. Maar as ek seker was dat hulle yl van die koors, en ek weet dat een van hulle, ten minste, siek is, dan sou ek hierdie kamp verlaat, en, al kos dit ook my lewe, sou ek hulle gaan help. Ekskuus, meneer, maar dan sou u baie verkeerd doen, sê Silver. Dit sou u kosbare lewe kos, daarvan kan u seker wees. Ek is nou hart en siel aan u kant, en ek sou nie graag een van die party wil verloor nie, en minste van almal u, dokter, want ek weet hoeveel ek u verskuldig is. Maar daardie kerels daaronder, hulle weet nie wat dit beteken om hulle woord te hou nie.

Nee, sê die dokter, jy alleen is n man van jou woord, ne?

Dit was so te sê die laaste wat ons van die seerowers gehoor het. Net een slag het ons van ver af n geweerskoot gehoor, en daaruit opgemaak dat hulle aan jag was. Ons het raad gehou, en besluit om hulle op die eiland te laat staan, tot groot blydschap van Ben Gunn, en met die voile toestemming van Gray. Ons het vir hulle n goeie voorraad kruit en koeëls agtergelaat, die grootste gedeelte van die gesoute bokvleis, n paar soorte medisyne, en ander benodigdhede, soos gereedskap, klerasie, n orige seil, n rol tou, en, op besonder versoek van die dokter, n mooi klompie tabak.

Dit was ons laaste werk op die eiland. Al die goud was aan boord, en ons het genoeg water en bokvleis gehad, in geval van nood. Eindelik, op n heerlike oggend, het ons die anker gelig, iets wat ons skaars kon regkry

en North Inlet uitgevaar, met dieselfde vlag aan die mas waaronder ons geveg het in die blokhuis.

Die drie muiters het ons al die tyd beter afgeloer as wat ons gedink het. Toe ons deur die poort vaar, moes ons baie na aan die suidpunt hou, en daar sien ons toe al drie van hulle op hulle knieë in die sand, mt die hande in die lug, asof hulle

smeeek. Ek dink ons het almal sleg gevoel om hulle in die ellendige toestand agter te laat; maar ons kon nie n tweede opstand aan die gang laat sit nie, en om hulle net huis toe te neem om gehang te word, sou n wrede soort medelyde gewees het. Die dokter het na hulle geroep, en gesê waar ons die kos en ander goed vir hulle gelaat het. Maar hulle het aangehou met roep, en ons gesmeek om tog om Godswil genadig te wees, en hulle nie te laat sterf op daardie plek nie.

Eindelik, toe hulle sien dat die skip maar aanhou seil, en al amper buite die bereik van hulle stemme was, spring een van hulle op, en stuur ons n koeël agtema, wat bo-oor Silver se kop fluit, en dwars deur die groot seil trek. Ons het toe skuiling gesoek agter die verskansing, en toe ek weer uit kyk, was hulle weg van die strand af, en die land self was amper uit die gesig uit. Nog voor die middag het die hoogste rots van Skateiland, tot my onuitspreklike vreugde, agter die blou horison verdwyn.

Ons was so kort van manskappe, dat elke man aan boord die hande uit die mou moes steek. Net die kaptein het op n matras in die agterskip geleë, en sy bevele gegee. Hy was baie beter, maar moes nog stil gehou word. Ons het koers gehou na die naaste hawe in Spaans-Amerika, want ons kon dit nie waag om huis toe te gaan met so min manskappe nie. Soos dit was, het ons sulke stormagtige weer gehad, dat ons almal afgemat was voor ons die land bereik het.

Net mooi sononder het ons die anker laat val in n pragtige baai wat deur die land ingesluit was, en dadelik het daar van die strand af bote vol negers en Mexikaanse Indiane gekom, wat vrugte en groente het om te verkoop, en almal bied aan om te duik vir geld. Dit het n mens se hart goed gedoen om soveel opgeruimde gesigte te sien, en sulke heerlike vrugte te proe na ons aaklige verblyf op die eiland. Die dokter en die squire het my saamgeneem om die aand op land te gaan deurbring. Hier het hulle die kaptein van n Engelse oorlogskip ontmoet, met hom aan gesels geraak, aan boord van sy skip gegaan, en, kortom, so n aangename tydjie deurgebring, dat die dag al begin te breek toe ons weer by die Hispaniola uitkom.

Ben Gunn was alleen op dek, en sodra ons by hom kom, begin hy, met allerhande gebare, n bekentenis te doen. Silver was weg. Ben het hom n paar uur gelede in n boot gehelp, en hy was na die land toe. Hy verseker ons hy het dit net gedoen om ons lewe te red, want ons sou dit tog seker verloor het, met die eenbeen skelm aan boord. Maar dit was nie al nie. Die skeepskok het nie met leë hande vertrek nie. Ongemerkt het hy een van die planke deurgesaag en een van die sakke geld, sowat drie of vier honderd pond se waarde, uitgehaal, om hom op sy swerftogte aan te help. Ek dink ons was almal bly om so goedkoop van hom af te kom.

Wel, om kort te gaan, ons het n paar matrose aan-geneem, n

voorspoedige reis gehad, en die Hispaniola het in Bristol aangekom net toe Mnr. Blandly begin te dink om ons te laat opsoek. Net vyf van die wat met die Hispaniola weggeseil het, het weer teruggekom. Drank en die Duiwel het die res afgemaai. Tog was ons darem nog beter daaraan af as die skip waarvan hulle gesing het:

Net een man is nog lewendig,

En hul was vyf en sewentig.

Elkeen van ons het n ruim deel van die buit ontvang, en het dit verstandig of dwaas gebruik, net volgens ons geaardheid. Kaptein Smollett het die see vaarwel gesê.

Gray het nie alleen sy geld opgespaar nie, maar hy het skielik lus gekry om dit meer te maak, en het hom dus toegelê op sy vak. Hy is nou stuurman en mede-eienaar van n groot skip; buitendien is hy getroud en die vader van n huisgesin. Wat Ben Gunn betref, hy het duisend pond ontvang, en hy het dit alles uitgegee of uitgedobbel in drie weke, of, beter gesê, in neëntien dae, want op die twintigste het hy al weer kom bedel. Hy is toe huisbediende gemaak, presies wat hy gevrees het op die eiland. Hy leef nog, en die jongmense van die dorp is baie gek oor hom, al pla hulle hom so dikwels. Op Son-dae is hy n staatmaker-lid van die koor.

Van Silver het ons nooit weer gehoor nie. Daardie vreeslike seeman met sy een been is tog eindelijk heeltemal uit my lewe verdwyn; hy het seker sy ou swart vrou weer ontmoet, en hulle twee leef ęrens van hulle rente, met Kaptein Flint. Ek hoop dit, in elk geval, want sy kans op n genoeglike lewe hiernamaals is nie besonder groot nie.

Die staaf-silwer en die wapens le nog, sover as ek weet, waar Flint hulle begrawe het; en daar kan hulle maar gerus vir my part bly le. Hulle sal my nooit met n span osse en ysterkettings na daardie vervloekte eiland toe terugbring nie; en my benoudste drome is dat ek die branders hoor dreun teen die strand van die eiland, of partymaal skrik ek wakker dat ek regop sit in bed, terwyl die skerp stem van Kaptein Flint nog in my ore klink: Spaanse dollars! Spaanse dollars!